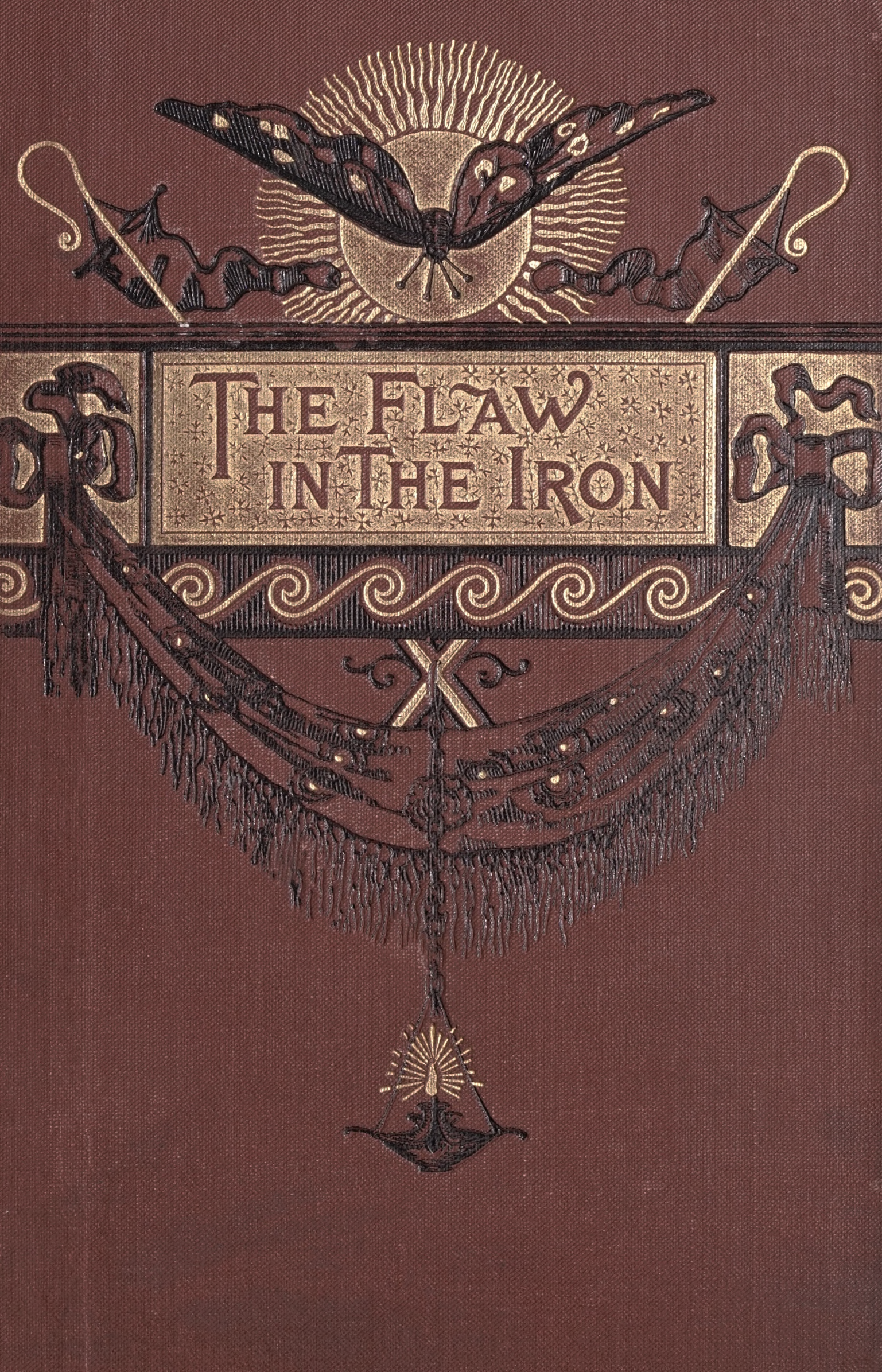
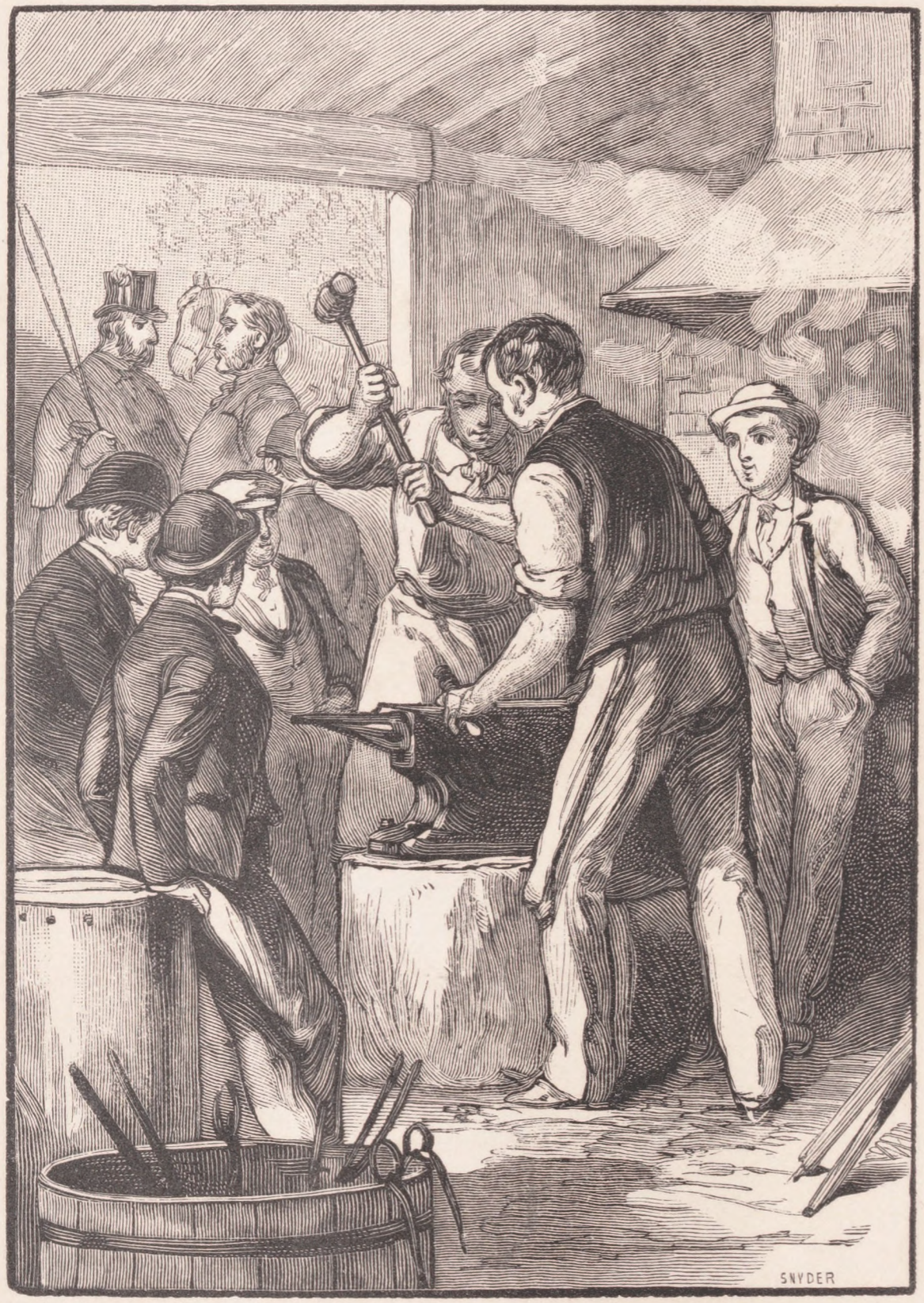

THE FLAW
IN THE IRON

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. PZ3 Copyright No.

Shelf .D2943F

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



In the Blacksmith's Shop. Page 8.

THE FLAW IN THE IRON;

OR,

THE WEAK PLACE IN THE CHARACTER THAT FAILED IN TEMPTATION.

BY THE

REV. J. A. DAVIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHINESE SLAVE-GIRL," "TOM BARD," "CHOH LIN, THE CHINESE BOY WHO BECAME A PREACHER," ETC.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
COPYRIGHT
DEC 20 1888
27365
WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
AND SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK,
No. 1334 CHESTNUT STREET.

PZ3
.D2943F

COPYRIGHT, 1888, BY

THE TRUSTEES OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
AND SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

WESTCOTT & THOMSON,
Stereotypers and Electrotypers, Philada.

THIS book explains in its title its mission and message. Few lessons need more to be learned by boys in their school-days than those which are here taught. There are many temptations to leave flaws and weak spots in character covered up in the growing life. For a time they are not discovered, but there comes a day when the stress falls at the very point of weakness, and the man fails. The only way to be safe in all life's testings is to make the character perfectly honest and good throughout. This story illustrates this vital truth, and also shows well how such character may be formed.

EDITOR.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

THE IRON AXLE 7

CHAPTER II.

THE BROKEN AXLE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT 35

CHAPTER III.

THE BORROWER 66

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESULTS OF BORROWING 101

CHAPTER V.

GIVING 134

CHAPTER VI.

A HELPING HAND 163

CHAPTER VII.

REFUSING TO ACCEPT STRENGTH 202

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE
TRIUMPH AND DISAPPOINTMENT 238

CHAPTER IX.

COWARDLY, YET BRAVE 273

CHAPTER X.

BREAKING AT THE WEAK PLACE 315

CHAPTER XI.

STARTING ANEW 355

THE FLAW IN THE IRON.

CHAPTER I.

THE IRON AXLE.

DURING the noon-hour some of the boys of Metona school were in the blacksmith-shop watching the men at work. The boys liked this place, and were often found in it when the weather was too wet or cold for play, and sometimes—as this day—when there was nothing else to take their attention. The shop was unlike many blacksmith-shops, for Mr. Burhans, the owner, was a man whom all liked, while his foreman, Mr. Rogers, was a man of whom little could be said but what was good. Then, John Varnel, who had just completed his apprenticeship, was an old friend and a former schoolmate of the older boys, though James Smart was a stranger to most of them.

As the boys were watching Mr. Rogers and James at work, Mr. Moran's coachman, Mike, drove up with a large three-seat wagon and called out,

"Where's the boss?"

"He's gone away to-day," replied Mr. Rogers. "Can I do anything for you?"

"That yees can if yees will," said Mike, jumping from his seat to the ground. "The boss wants a new axle put in this wagon, and he wants it by foive o'clock this afthernoon. He manes to take a roide with his woife and childer, and wants this to go with. He says he won't take the kerridge; that's too small and close this hot weather. Ye'll do it, now, will yees?"

"We'll try," replied Mr. Rogers, "but it is very short notice, and I am not sure that we have in the shop the best iron for the work. Mr. Burhans has gone to order some. I wish you could wait."

"Don't say 'wait' to Boss Moran unless yees want to wait altogether," answered Mike. "Whin he wants a thing, he wants it; and that is all there is about it. If I was to go back and till him yees would wait, he'd say, 'Go back and get that wagon;' and that'd be the last of your jobs with him. Moind, I till yees. Do what he wants and yees will foind him a foine mon, but thry to have your own way and yees will get it without him."

"We'll do the best we can, and I think can have the wagon ready; but I fear the iron we have is not the best."

"Put it in and thrust to luck, I say. If it breaks, yees will have another job, that's all," said Mike, good-naturedly. "Make it the best yees can, and lave the rist to luck. Moind, now; foive o'clock.

Don't fail. I'll be here thin to get it.—Now, byes, home with yees," shouted Mike as, after loosing the horses from the wagon, he caught up the reins and started with his team homeward.

Mr. Moran—Mike's "boss," as he called him—had a country-seat not far from Metona where with his family he spent the summer, usually going to the city two or three days each week, but living in the city during the winter.

"Here, John! You'll have to go at this wagon right off," said Mr. Rogers to John Varnel as he came into the shop after dinner. "It must have a new axle by five o'clock, and you will have no time to spare. I wish Mr. Moran could wait; there is no good iron in the shop for such work, and I don't like to be responsible for putting poor iron into any job going out under my hands."

"Them city fellers thinks they is mighty big when they come out in the country," spoke James Smart; "they act as if they owned the hull world and all who live in it. They feel as big as an old peacock on the top rail of a fence, and they be about as big fools."

"Never mind, James; you and I were born and brought up in the country, so we will be obliged to show our good bringing up by treating them kindly and politely," responded Mr. Rogers, quietly.

"What iron shall I take, Mr. Rogers?" asked John as he fastened on his apron.

"That bar yonder is all there is," replied Mr.

Rogers, pointing to a bar of iron standing in a corner. "It is not as good as I would like to put into that or any other wagon, but it is all we have."

John took the bar, and, laying it on the anvil, gave a stroke or two with the hammer, and then, looking carefully at the iron, said,

"This isn't the best iron, Mr. Rogers, and I don't believe it ought to go into an axle. It looks as if there were a flaw in it there."

Mr. Rogers carefully examined the bar, and then said,

"I hardly think that is a flaw. Even if it be a weak spot, it will be where the least strain comes, and I think you can risk putting it in. I hardly feel like refusing to put in the new axle, lest we lose Mr. Moran's custom. I wish Mr. Burhans were here to take the responsibility himself. It is a question whether to lose Mr. Moran's custom by refusing to do his work or by doing it so unsafely lose it anyhow. That is about the way I look at it. Make it as good as you can, and we will take the risk."

As they were talking, Mr. Hendricks, the teacher of the boys' department of the school, came to the shop and stood listening; he liked to watch the workmen and talk to them, so his presence was not unusual.

As John began working at the axle the teacher spoke to the boys:

"I think it is nearly schooltime, boys, so we

may as well go on;" and, without waiting for them to follow, he went toward the schoolhouse.

Raymond Leigh, one of the older boys and a favorite of the teacher, hastened on, and, overtaking Mr. Hendricks, asked,

"Do you think it was the best thing to do, Mr. Hendricks, to put that poor iron into the wagon?"

"I am not enough of a blacksmith, Raymond, to say whether or not the iron is strong enough for the work required of it. If it be strong enough to do its work, I presume that is all that will be required of it."

"But was it right to put such iron into a wagon, where lives might be at stake?" inquired the boy, earnestly. "What if that axle should break when the wagon is loaded with people? for Mr. Moran takes loads in it sometimes. It might hurt, if not kill, some of them."

"I know there is great danger," replied the teacher, "if the iron be not strong enough for its work; but, since you and I do not know that, we may as well hope for the best and not waste our anxieties on forebodings that may be entirely unfounded. But there is a lesson we may learn, Raymond, from that iron."

"What lesson?" asked the boy, eagerly looking into his teacher's face.

Between the two there was not only a warm friendship, but great confidence. Mr. Hendricks was liked by his pupils, but by none was he more

liked than by Raymond. The teacher was free to talk with his pupils and ready at proper times to share their fun and be as much of a boy himself as any under his care.

"You know that the axle is an important part of the wagon. The two axles together carry the load; if one break, the wagon is useless. So the usefulness of the wagon depends on the axles."

"So it does on other parts," suggested Raymond. "Let a wheel be broken or the bolts holding the parts together be gone, and the wagon cannot be used."

"That is true; each part is necessary, and it is necessary that each part be made strong, for the strength of the whole wagon is little greater than the weakest part. That wagon, though all the other parts be ever so strong, will bear only what that weakest axle will carry. A single weak place in that makes the whole wagon weak. To have a strong wagon one must have every part of it strong. That wagon is somewhat like character. Our characters are as strong only as are their weakest parts. To have a strong character you must have every part of it strong. One weak place, though ever so trifling, weakens the whole."

When school was opened, Mr. Hendricks said,

"Boys, before going to your studies I think we may spend a few moments profitably in talking of building character."

There was silence at once, and the face of each

boy seemed to say, "Go on. I am ready to listen." Perhaps some preferred listening to studying, but most of the boys wished to hear what Mr. Hendricks had to say.

When the teacher saw that all were listening, he began:

"Some of you were in the blacksmith-shop as I came back from dinner and saw a wagon brought there to have a new axle put in it. But there was no iron in the shop that was thought fit for the work, yet, because the owner of the wagon needed it at once, the poor iron was used, much against the will of the blacksmith, for the repair. Now, who can tell me how strong that wagon will be with a weakened axle?"

"No stronger than the poor axle," was answered by two other boys besides Raymond.

"How strong must any part of a wagon, or of anything else, be?" asked the teacher.

"As strong as it can possibly be made," replied a boy.

"Why?"

"Because, if it be not as strong as it can be made, it will not be able to do all it ought to."

"That is a good answer," said Mr. Hendricks. "Now who can tell me how strong anything composed of parts is?"

"Only as strong as its weakest part," spoke Raymond.

"You are right. That shows how necessary it

is to have each part as strong as possible. While this is true of wagons, do any of you think the same may be said of character?"

To this question there was for a few moments no answer, until Raymond said,

"I suppose it is, sir. Wagons are somewhat like people, but I cannot say exactly how it is."

"Perhaps I can help you," spoke Mr. Hendricks. "Wagons are meant to carry people and other burdens. Character is meant, not to carry people and burdens in the same way, yet to bear responsibilities and to do work for people."

"Mr. Hendricks, what is character?" asked a bright-eyed boy.

"Willie, I am afraid that I cannot make it as plain as you would like, but I will try to explain what it is. Character is the framework of self; it is that in us which makes us what we are. It is composed of the principles and purposes of life, the motives and desires that make us do what we do and as we do. Character is self when we do just as we would if no one had anything to do with us and no one had told us to do or be anything."

"I guess I know now what you mean, Mr. Hendricks," spoke Willie. "It is a colt let loose in the pasture with the halter off. It doesn't care for anybody nor for anything but fun and frolic."

"Not exactly that," replied the teacher, smiling, "yet you have part of the idea. The colt would show its character, perhaps, when entirely free; so

we show our characters when we are entirely free to act."

"Then character is that which makes us do what we do when nobody hinders," suggested Willie.

"Yes, that is character," responded Mr. Hendricks. "Character is what we are when all pretence and outside influence is taken away; it is what is left of us when others let us alone to do and to be as we will."

"Mr. Hendricks, how do we get character? Does God give it or do we get it ourselves?" asked a boy who had not spoken before.

"That is what I wish to speak of soon," answered the teacher, "but I may as well answer now by saying that God gives part, but we have much to do with forming our own characters. However, we will talk of something else first. The work we do in this world depends very much on our characters, whether good or bad. A person with a bad character will do badly, while he who has a good one will do well: he will be good and useful, while the other will be bad and worse than useless. Character is a kind of spring or fountain from which our actions flow: if the spring be bad, the stream can hardly be good. God has placed each one of you boys in this world to *do* as well as to *be* good; he has placed you where you can learn to become good and strong for right and usefulness—that is, can gain good and strong characters to become useful and good. I said that God gives us part and we

are to make the rest. He does not give to each the same kind, because he has different work for each to do, and a different place for each, so does not wish us to be alike."

"Mr. Hendricks, does God ever give people bad characters to start with?" asked a boy.

"Why do you ask that, James?" inquired the teacher.

"Because I heard father say that he had known men who had a taste for drink when they were boys, and that some seemed to be bad naturally; he said they were born so. Did God make them so?"

"That is a difficult question, and one I cannot answer. Yet this can be said: we all are born with sinful natures; we naturally do wrong rather than right. But some turn more readily than do others in ways of evil. I have heard it said that persons are born with a love for strong drink. I know that some learn very early from those with whom they live to cheat and steal and lie and swear. Perhaps it is true that one is more liable to do wrong in one way and another in another way; but I do not think we can decide such matters here. Let us rather think of what we can do to form good characters. No one is born with a character so bad that he cannot change it if he tries; that is certain. If he be more liable to go wrong in a certain way, then he will be all the more of a man, and the stronger too, for overcoming that tendency. But we will go back to the wagon for our lesson. If

one axle or one part be weak, then the whole will be weak. That is the way with character: if one part be weak, the whole will be the less able to do the work intended. Suppose that you went to buy a wagon to carry a ton, and found exactly the wagon you wished, only one of its wheels was so weak that it could carry no more than its share of half a ton; what would you do?"

"If it was cheap, I'd buy it and put in a new wheel," answered Tom Wasson.

Though this was not the answer expected, Mr. Hendricks said,

"But you would not want it for use with that poor wheel. You must have it a great deal cheaper because it had a weak wheel. And when you got it, you would have a strong one put in; so you would not want that wagon just as it was: it could not do your work. Yet all the others except that one part were exactly what you wished; that one weak place injured all the rest. So it is with the weak place in the character: it injures all the other parts, and in some cases unfits entirely for the work intended. Sometimes the weak place in the character may not be known by others, and, as a wagon with a weak axle, it may be loaded with heavy responsibilities; then, just when and where strength are most needed, there may come a break and destruction and ruin. What you need is a character that is strong in every part."

The boys looked from one to the other, but re-

mained silent. Tom Wasson, thinking the eye of the teacher was directed toward him, felt that he must answer; so he asked,

"Mr. Hendricks, supposing a boy has got some things in his character that he don't want there; how's he going to get them out?"

"That is a good question, Thomas," replied the teacher; "I will answer it in a minute. That would be what I mean by repairing character. We will first speak of building character. You see that it is necessary to build up a good character from the beginning, for it is far more difficult to take out bad material and put in good than to put in the good at first. Put honest purposes and principles into your hearts, but nothing that is evil, or even doubtful. Be manly and faithful, remembering that each thing you do, say, think, hear, see, goes toward making up character. And do not forget that you are busy each day and every hour in building character, and that on what you are doing to-day will to a greater or less extent depend your future. But I will answer Thomas's question. If you have begun to build with poor material, stop building—stop at once—and remove the imperfect parts. It will be far easier to remove them now than it will be after you have built other—and, it may be, good—material over them. That weak part will remain to weaken the rest. Get rid of it. If you have begun to cheat, to tell untruths, to use bad language, to give way to passion, to be selfish, untidy, or anything

that is not proper and right, stop at once. Set to work trying to overcome such sins and bad habits. Get rid of them, no matter what may be the cost nor what the effort. If at any time you are tempted to deceive or to be selfish, refuse even to listen to the temptation. Say to yourself that you cannot afford to weaken your character by putting into it any such weak and worthless material."

"Mr. Hendricks, how can we know that we are putting poor material into our characters?" asked Raymond.

"By studying and searching ourselves closely," answered the teacher. "If we ask our friends to point out our faults and our defects, it will help us greatly. Many faults we fail to see, or fail to see in their true light. The kind help of a true friend is worth a great deal. Then we not only must be willing to take kindly the criticism, but must act upon it. There is no good, but there may be much harm, in telling others their faults if they refuse to correct them."

"But what if some one says hard things about us when we ask about our faults?" inquired Tom Wasson. "When boys tell one another their faults, it often has a fight at one end, if not at both ends."

"You would not fight a friend who at your request told your faults to you alone if he did it to help you correct them, would you, Thomas?" asked Mr. Hendricks.

"No, sir," answered Tom; "but most boys don't

tell faults that way. It's when we want to get even with a fellow that we talk to him of his failings."

"Before we begin our studies I wish to tell a story that may help to impress what has been said," said the teacher. "There was a ship-captain, a brave man whom everybody trusted; passengers preferred crossing the ocean on his ship to going with any other man. But this man had one weakness: in times of great trial and anxiety he would take a glass of brandy—as he said, to sustain him and steady his nerves. He never became drunk, and no one noticed the effect of the liquor on him after he had taken it. On a voyage across the ocean his ship encountered a storm. The storm was very heavy and lasted long, though the strong vessel ploughed her way through it and safely crossed the waters. To keep up his strength the captain took more brandy than usual; and when the ship reached the coast, he was almost drunk. He remained on deck and gave orders, but his mind was not clear, nor was he able to decide fairly about the course of his vessel. He commanded the men at the wheel to steer a little out of the usual course, saying that it was a safe route to take; but as the ship was going along swiftly and the passengers were expecting to be on land in a few hours, there came a shock, and then another, and the great vessel stopped: she had run on a rock. The engines were reversed, and they tried to back off. Soon the men came running up from below and said that the water

was coming into the ship from a great leak, and that she was sinking. The fires were put out and the vessel was helpless. Soon she settled in the water, and the captain saw that his ship was sinking. As quickly as possible the boats were lowered; passengers hurried into them, and the loaded boats started for shore. Many could not find room in the boats; these tried to make rafts by which they might float after the vessel went down. Some fastened life-preservers to their bodies, and waited to throw themselves into the sea until the ship was nearly ready to sink. Before they expected it the great vessel went down, carrying with her her captain, part of the crew and some of the passengers. A few of these were saved, but most of them had perished before help came. Can you boys tell me what ruined that vessel and destroyed the lives of a great number of people?"

"Brandy!" shouted one of the boys.

"Yes; brandy that the captain took as a servant became his master. But why did he take brandy?"

"To steady his nerves, you said," was the reply.

"Yes; he supposed that it would help him through times of great care and anxiety. He trusted in brandy, and that betrayed and ruined him. His love for strong drink was the weak point in the captain's character, and in time of great trial, when he was carrying great responsibilities, his character broke and failed at that weak point. People did not know his weakness: they

trusted him; but at the very time their trust was greatest, when they needed his wisdom most, he failed."

At the afternoon recess there was some earnest talk among the boys, though not all of it serious. They gathered in groups and discussed what Mr. Hendricks had said, and asked how they might help one another correct faults.

"I'll tell you, fellows," spoke Tom Wasson, "how we can do it. It will be easy and will work first rate if you do as I say. You just choose me to tell each fellow his faults, and then it will be your work to correct them. That will be a division of labor, as we heard at the lecture last winter. I will tell, and you boys will do."

"That may do fairly well for us," replied Will Oster, "but who will show the bad material in your character?"

"The fact is, fellows," answered Tom, "that I doubt if there be enough bad material in me to make it worth while to put up any scaffolding for repairs. But of course I would not like to say the same of all the rest. You see, since I have been so much longer time acquainted with Tom Wasson than any of you have, and since he and I always are together, and I know him through and through like a book, I know exactly what is in him; so I doubt if it will pay to close him up for repairs."

"Perhaps if you begin to correct yourself, and take out the bad material while you put in good,

we will be more ready to listen and obey," said Nick Griffin. "It is easy enough to tell what to do, but we must know how to do by seeing our teacher do it first. So I move that Tom Wasson be our teacher and show us how to do what he teaches.

"No need to show sensible fellows, as long as I tell exactly how the work must be done," answered Tom. "Does a boat-builder have to float first before he can build boats to float? Does a farmer have to become corn before he can raise corn? Does a teacher have to take a thrashing before he knows how to give one?"

"Good arguments, Tom, for some uses," responded Raymond, "but not for this time. We are not boats nor corn, but boys who need to be shown how to do. And if your idea of teaching be to give the lessons at the end of a switch, then I think we will all attend some other school than yours. When you want to learn, you ask people to *show* you how to do it, not *tell* you. How would you have learned to skate or swim? From somebody telling you while sitting in a chair at home? You had to go to the water and see how swimming was done, and to the ice to see people skate, before you even knew what swimming and skating were. Now, if you expect to teach us, you must be able to do it by showing rather than by telling."

"Oh, I understand you fellows. You just want me to be the wild animal in the ring, going through

all the performances while you sit and look on. But I don't mean to make a show for you to look at for nothing; when I start a circus, I mean to charge admission. But say, fellows! Mr. Hendricks was in earnest, and I want to be. I've been thinking a good deal about what he said. I mean to make something of myself when I am a man, and I don't want to go down all in a heap just when I'm up at my best. I know he is right about having good stuff inside a fellow's character, and I want only what's good in mine; but how to get it—that's what I want to know. Now, while I was joking about Tom Wasson being a good fellow who didn't need any repairs, I don't know where to begin to make repairs; I can't find out what's poor and what's good. Maybe you fellows don't have any trouble to know just what is right and what isn't, but I do. I say! let's help one another, as Mr. Hendricks told us. What do you say?"

"I'm in for that," spoke John Swart; "but the trouble may be that some fellows will not take what we say, and others will say such hard things that no one would take them. Each one will want to tell the other fellows their faults, but will not want to hear a word about his own."

"That will not be fair," replied Raymond. "It must be 'a give-and-take game,' and as fair giving as taking. Each one who gives ought to take. We are not a lot of enemies, but a lot of friends who wish to help one another do what is right and

fair. I, for one, am ready to begin and take any honest words you want to say about me."

"I am ready to go in for this, but who will be the one to take the first hit? I don't want to be the fellow," said Will Oster.

"If no one else is, I am," answered Raymond; "so go ahead, boys, but one at a time. Come, now; here I stand: who hits first?"

"I don't know that it will come in the line of what we are to say, but I want to ask you, Raymond, when you mean to give me back the knife you borrowed last spring? You said you had forgotten it, and I want to put you in mind of it. The knife itself wasn't so much, but I thought a great deal of it because my uncle gave it to me before he died. I guess that is part of what we are to tell: you forget, when you borrow, to pay back." So spoke Nick Griffin.

"Well, Nick, I did forget, and it is true that I am very forgetful. I have so many things to think of that it is no wonder," replied Raymond. "But really I don't know what I did with that knife. I put it somewhere to give back, and can't say now where it is; I will look it up when I get home. But do you boys think Nick is right? Am I bad about borrowing and not paying back?"

"Yes, I believe you are, Raymond," said John Swart. "You know you didn't send back that wheelbarrow you borrowed of my aunt until she asked two or three times for it."

"Well, maybe it is so," answered Raymond, thoughtfully. "But that is only a defect of memory, and not a part of character."

"What is memory but a part of character?" asked Will Oster. "Why, it's the straps that hold character together. A man's memory is the best part of him."

"I believe that Nick has hit about right, Raymond," said John Swart, "only he has not hit quite as hard as he might. You don't always ask when you want to borrow—that is, if the fellow is not there. You just take it and tell him about it afterward—if you don't forget. That is the way it was with my ink some time ago. I couldn't find it anywhere until I looked on your desk, and there it was as big as you please and as contented as if it belonged to you."

"I am sorry, John, that I forgot to take that ink back, but I meant to do it. You were not there when I borrowed it, or I would have asked for it. I don't mean to take things that people don't wish me to have. I knew you would as lief I took it as not, so I just took it; but the trouble is I forgot."

"Let me say a word, Raymond," spoke Tom Wasson. "What you need is a new memory. The old one is worn out; it breaks down all the time and drops its load anywhere—on other fellows' desks, in the back yard, and sometimes you can't tell where."

"I've heard about memory-seed being bought

at the drug-store. I wish we could get such seed; I'd start a garden at once. I find that my memory is failing too," said Will Oster.

"Age, Will—age is troubling you. Old people always lose their memories," suggested Tom. "I have heard that boys are much older now than they were in the days of our grandfathers."

"No doubt of it," replied John Swart. "The boys of the time of our grandfathers should be old enough to be men by this time."

"You know what I mean, John," answered Tom. —"Another fact I have heard, and we have just had the best of proof: boys are smarter now than boys were fifty years ago."

"Not all, Tom," said Will, laughing, "or where would you find a place?"

"Right, Will; present company always excepted," said Tom.

"Well, boys, you have had your say about me, and I think it time to set up another for criticism," spoke Raymond. "Who'll take the next chance? It does not hurt much when you are used to it, fellows. The fact is I have heard so much about my borrowing and forgetting to return that I forget the fault itself."

"What's the use of trying to help you, then?" asked John. "If we teach, you should learn."

"That's so, John, and I mean to try; but it seems such a trifle that I hardly thought it worth while."

"Do you call it a trifle to keep a fellow's knife several months?" asked Nick. "I don't mean to say hard words, Raymond, yet that is one of the things we are to try to make right in our characters."

"Well, who is going to take the next chance?" asked Tom. "If no one else does, I must; for this performance cannot stop here. Raymond has paid his price like a man, and he has a right to see the show. So come on, boys. Here's Tom Wasson—the worst scamp in Metona. What can you say in his favor? What right has he to live? If none, then slaughter him; only make the execution as painless as possible."

"One of Tom's worst faults is that he never forgets," said Will. "If there be any mischief going on, he always remembers to be there. He has remarkable presence of mind where fun is."

"Presence of body too," suggested Nick.

"Yes, and no less remarkable absence of mind when a lesson is to be learned or recited," continued Will.

"Hold on, fellows! Is that right? Am I a poor student? Don't I do my duty to my lessons? Am I such a fellow for fun?" asked Tom.

"You like fun, Tom, that's a fact," replied Raymond, "and are not remarkable for your love of study. If there were a school for mischief, you would never be absent; and when you graduated, you would stand at the head of your class."

"Maybe that is so, boys, but I didn't think of it before. I did not think I was worse than the rest. I am glad that you have told me; I'll look more carefully. But go on; I want to know all;" and Tom looked seriously at his companions. "Don't be afraid to say all you have to tell."

"Tom, I don't know that you ever stole a chicken or robbed a bird's nest, but I've seen you cheat a good fellow out of a day of time. You did it all for fun, but you cheated him, nevertheless," spoke Nick.

"I cheated, Nick? When? I'd like to know when I cheated a good fellow, or a bad fellow, either? But it looks as if I was being shown up for all I'm worth—or all I am worthless."

"The fellow you cheated is named Tom, and he is a good chap too. No matter about his other name. You cheated him one day last winter out of a whole day of schooling. You took him off skating and did not bring him back until night, and he got behind his class."

"Oh, pshaw, Nick! Why do you try to sell a fellow in that way? I did stay from school one day, and did it to have a good skate. How did I know we would have another such day and such ice during the rest of the winter? The temptation was too strong, and I yielded. I made up by hard study afterward, and had my fun besides."

"Yet you did not do right, Mr. Hendricks said, even though for a day of pleasure. He said that

duty should be done first, no matter whether or not you got the pleasure afterward. He said, you may remember," continued Raymond, "that a man who neglects duty for pleasure when a boy might do it when a man."

"You are right, boys," spoke Tom, thoughtfully; "I understand better now than I did then what Mr. Hendricks meant. I did not think it was any of his business if I made up for lost time by hard study afterward. I am glad that you put it in that way, Nick. I did cheat myself; that is a fact. But go on. No, you can't, for there goes the bell. It is too bad that we must stop here. We'll try again, fellows."

The boys did try again, but not until the next morning, as each was eager to reach home after school. Early the following day several had gathered on the school-ground and were eagerly discussing what will be told in the next chapter. From that discussion they turned to talk of one another's faults.

"Well, boys, we had better put some of the rest of you through the mill, as Raymond and I were ground up yesterday," spoke Tom Wasson.—"Have you kneaded yourself together, Raymond, with bran all left out? If you fellows want to try me again, I'm willing. I wish to make something of myself and to have no poor iron in my character."

"I think you had your share yesterday, Tom," said John. "Let us give Will a chance; or if you

want to, I'm ready for my dose. It is bitter, I suppose."

"I guess we'd better begin with you, John," replied Tom; "the sooner, the better. If you wish to root out weeds, root them out at once; so here goes. But I don't just remember what to say of you, unless I ask a question. Did you ever tell a lie, John?"

"Yon don't mean to call me a liar, I suppose?" answered John.

"I didn't call you anything, John," said Tom; "I only asked a question. If you grow angry, of course we cannot give you any help."

"All right; I'll take it as you meant," spoke John. "I don't believe I ever told a lie—that is, a willful one—unless— Well, I am not sure. When did I?"

"Oh, I asked, and cannot tell as well as you: you are best acquainted with your history," answered Tom. "But, John, are you as careful to tell the exact truth as you might be?"

"I mean to tell what is true—except in a joke, of course. Is that lying?—What do you say, Raymond?"

"Father says that in law lying is an intent to tell what is known by the speaker to be false," answered Raymond.

"A lie is telling what we know is false," spoke Will, "with an intention to deceive. A lie is made by our own purpose."

"Pretty good, young man," said Tom, patting Will on the shoulder. "That is what I think, only I could not have said it just that way. I would say that we told lies when we said what we knew was not so and meant to try to make others believe it to be true."

"I'll you what you may correct, John," said Nick Griffin—"your habit of telling big stories."

"That's so," responded John. "Mother has often told me about that, and said that it would grow on me if I allowed it to."

"I have noticed that you are careless, John," added Raymond. "You forget your hair and your dress; you think it a thing rather to be proud of than ashamed of to appear untidy. Were I you, I would brush my hair more carefully and polish my shoes oftener. People notice trifles, for trifles go to make up character; so Mr. Hendricks says."

"Did you ever think that you are not as respectful as you should be?" asked Nick. "You treat old people sometimes as if you thought them hardly worth a kind word."

"Well, that *is* so!" replied John, emphatically; "it is a way I've got."

"That is no excuse, John. We are starting to get rid of such ways," said Raymond. "Because it is your way, and not a good one, you are to overcome it. What is the use of our telling, if you don't mean to correct it?"

"That's so too," replied John; "I didn't think

of that. I have so often heard people say, when excusing themselves for habits that were no credit to them, that it is their way; but I thought it was a way that did neither them nor any one else any good. There's Mr. Bummer; he's got a blunt way of speaking that frightens even the dogs, but he thinks it all right to keep that way because it is his. Just as well might he keep the measles or the mumps because they were his. I am glad, fellows, that you have told me. What more is there?"

"I guess you've had your share, and it's Will's turn," said Tom.

"All right; but be easy, boys. I'm bad enough, but don't make me worse," spoke Will. "I've been thinking a great deal about myself, and almost got scared at what I found."

"What did you find, Will?" asked Raymond. "Perhaps you know all your faults without our telling you."

"There is no use of bleeding a fellow when he has opened a vein himself," spoke Tom.—"How bad are you, Will?"

"There's no fun in this, Tom, I tell you," replied Will; "it has really set me thinking. But go on; tell me what you have to say."

"Let me say something, Will," said Nick. "You remember that time you and I went fishing? Didn't you try to get all the best places and pick out the best bait? Now, I don't know that it is so always, but are not you a little selfish?"

"Yes, Nick, a good deal so, but I don't want to be; that's a fact."

"Well, how about hitting dogs and cats that do not harm you?" asked Tom. "I'm afraid, Will, that you are not as merciful as you might be."

"Yes, that's what grandmother said last night when she and I had a talk. But it don't seem to me that animals have much feeling. They say nothing, and just take all quietly."

"That may be, but don't we often say least when we feel most?" asked Raymond. "I think, too, Will, that you are too ready to cause pain. When driving a horse, you whip him when there is no need of it."

"But I must make him go."

"That's so, Will; but what is the use of keeping at it all the time?" inquired Tom.

"There goes the bell," said Nick, "and my chance will come later."

CHAPTER II.

THE BROKEN AXLE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

BEFORE the wagon was ready for Mike, Mr. Burhans, the owner of the blacksmith-shop, returned and examined the work.

"Was that the best iron we had?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; it was the only thing that would do for an axle," replied Mr. Rogers. "I hardly knew what to do. It is not good iron, and is not fit for such work; but for fear of losing Mr. Moran's custom I concluded to risk putting it in. I wished you were here to decide for yourself."

"Well, it will have to go, I suppose," said the master; "but he must be told of it, or we must do what we can to make it strong enough to prevent an accident. I'll tell you what to do, Mr. Rogers: put an iron plate under the weak part in the axle, and clamp it fast around the axle. Then we can tell Mr. Moran to send back the wagon at his leisure and we will put in an axle made of good iron."

"I would like to see that Mr. Moran when the wagon comes home," said John Varnel. "When he sees an iron put by clamps to his axle, he will

be the man to take it off and say words not in the dictionary."

"He may do what he chooses, but I hardly think it wise for that wagon to be used with a load without being strengthened. If Mr. Moran means to take out his family and his friends this afternoon, he will no doubt take a good load, and that will be more than I would like to risk with that axle. It is our business to make our work as strong as we can, and then to tell others of its defects and let them do after that as they will," replied Mr. Burhans.

The wagon was finished as the master ordered, and was ready when Mike came.

"Is the wagon all ready?" asked the coachman. "The boss said Oi must hurry oop, for himsilf and all are ready."

"Yes, the wagon is ready, Mike," replied Mr. Rogers, "but we had no good iron for the axle, and used the best we had in the shop. We have fixed this so that it will be safe, even if not so nice as we would like. Mr. Burhans said we must tell you to say to Mr. Moran that when he can spare the wagon he must send it over again and we will fix it for nothing. You see that piece of iron that we put under the axle to make it strong and safe? Tell Mr. Moran why we put it there, and that we are sorry we could not make a better job."

"Oi'll tell the boss," replied Mike as he hurriedly put the horses to the wagon, "and let him do as he

will. It's his wagon, and it's himsilf will do as he plases. Little is the advice he'll take from me. He's a good mon enuff so long as ye lit him have his own way, but don't till him what to do, or he'll till yees to go to the warmest place he's ever heard about. If the wagon is safe, that's all Oi want."

"I'll warrant that it is safe," said Mr. Rogers as Mike drove away.

"What makes them city fellers so bossy?" asked James Smart. "Some folks feel mighty big because no one ever dares to show 'em how small they are. I'd just like to see that Mr. Moran taken down a peg or two; he needs it."

"Hold on, James!" said Mr. Rogers. "If Mr. Moran does not suit you, that is no reason why you should wish to see him 'taken down,' as you say."

"But I don't want to be rode over by no man, I don't care who he is," replied James. "I've got as good right to the road as Mr. Moran has, and he just tried to drive over me the other day. He hollered to me to get out of the way or he'd drive over me. Didn't I wish I was big enough to dare him to try it!"

"Better not resent every little trouble and unkindness," said Mr. Rogers; "it will only add to, and not lessen, your difficulties. The man who says least about the insults he receives will have the fewest to say anything about; that is my opinion."

"Oh, it's easy enough for men and bosses to talk that, but we 'prentice-fellers and boys don't have any

show 'less we stand up for ourselves. Some men treats us just as if we was meant to holler at and cuss. I guess they think we are like yeller dogs who don't live nowhere nor have no boss. I wouldn't give two pins for the feller who can't take his own part; he'll get kicked and cuffed to death 'fore he gets through with livin'. I mean to stand up all the time for my rights, and I don't care a snap who may be round."

"I do not believe in treating boys unkindly," answered Mr. Rogers, "and hope you will always find in this shop friends who will treat you as they wish you to treat them; but let me tell you, James, as your friend—and I am a much older man than you—that if you wish your rights and kind treatment from everybody you must first give rights to others and treat them kindly. To insist on your own rights, regardless of others', will be to win the ill-will of those whom you meet. The Bible is a wise book, and it gives the best rule for getting our own rights when it says that we must do to others as we would have them do to us."

"That's all right enough with them what does that way, but how are you goin' to do with men like Mr. Moran? He don't b'lieve in that kind. His Bible says, I guess, 'Do to others just as you have a mind to;' and he does it. What does he care for chaps like me? He'd treat John Varnel decent-like, 'cause he's no 'prentice any more; but when a man means to ride over me on the road and

won't give an inch, he's the kind I think needs 'tendin' to."

"I am afraid that you let Mr. Moran give you a great deal more trouble than is worth while," said Mr. Rogers. "If he does not treat you well, keep out of his way, but don't resent every injury; you will only feel the worse for it and gain his enmity. Better the good-will of a dog than his hatred."

"But what will you do when a dog bites you, Mr. Rogers? Let him bite again, or hit him and make him so 'fraid that he will keep out of your way?"

"Would not it be better to win the good-will of that dog and have him your friend ever after? But there is a better principle: Do good to all, not because of what you may get, but because it is right and because it is what God asks of you."

"Does God ask us to take kicks and cuffs and say nothing back, no matter how it hurts?" asked James.

"Yes," replied Mr. Rogers; "we read, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' You see, if we undertake to pay back the wrongs we receive, it will take a great deal of time and cause a great deal of unpleasantness and pain to us. Besides, it will often do great injury to others. We may repay where it is not due; we may make mistakes and pay back the wrong ones. That will be making two wrongs instead of righting one. It often happens that wrongs are not meant and that a

little explanation would set both sides right, while to pay back would make both sides bitter enemies. So, you see, God can better take in hand the whole matter and punish those who deserve it and protect those who need it."

"Well, I don't know," responded James, shaking his head doubtingly; "but 'tis hard not to hit back when a feller hits you first. It makes one feel a good deal better right off when he does pay back. It's just like puttin' hot iron to cold water: it cools it off right away, and that's the end of it."

"It may be the end of the heat in the iron, but not of the evil done by paying back. If you do feel better, it is not the best kind of better feeling; I doubt if you feel kindly to the one repaid, and I am sure he does not feel better toward you. He certainly would feel better toward you were you to let the injury pass without resenting it, and he would be careful not to injure you again."

"Would he, though? My, Mr. Rogers! you don't know what boys and some men are if you think so. When they see that you don't take your part, then they just pick at you. They think you are afraid and don't dare pay back; so they just try it again. Others try too. All think you don't amount to much and can be walked over as well as not, and they'll just walk over you."

"There is one thing you must not forget, James: God rules, and he sees what we suffer and what we do in return. He will call each one to account some

day. You cannot afford to pay back those who do not deserve it, because God will settle with you for that. Besides, when you undertake to resent and punish wrongs done to you, it is taking God's work out of his hands. He will not allow that. You would not take Mr. Burhans's work and business out of his hands, would you?"

"Of course not."

"You would not go around collecting debts and compelling people to pay you what they owed him, would you?"

"I guess not. They wouldn't pay even if I asked them."

"When you undertake to pay back what you have suffered from others, you are taking God's work out of his hands, and he will be obliged to settle with you some day. Better let people injure you, and patiently bear it, than harm them in return."

James shook his head, only partly convinced by Mr. Rogers's arguments, but had nothing more to say as he went on again with his work.

But we must turn our attention to Mr. Moran.

When Mike reached his master's home with the wagon, Mr. Moran shouted to him to tie the team and go at once to attend to some work. The coachman tried to tell him about the axle, but was ordered to go at once and do as he was bidden. The man gave himself no further thought about the wagon, since he had been told that it was safe, and he knew

that he could deliver the message of the blacksmith at some other time.

Mr. Moran came out of the house soon after Mike had gone, and took a look at the wagon. He had heard the coachman say something about the axle, and, walking to the back of the wagon, saw the iron plate fastened there.

"What did that blacksmith mean by fixing it in that way?" he said to himself. "It's the work of some bungling apprentice, I'll warrant. Perhaps he supposed I would allow such work to go unnoticed. Well, Mr. Burhans, if that is the kind of work you send out of your shop, it is the last you will send me.—Here, you Bill! come here and take off that iron fastened under the hind axle of the wagon. I fancy it is a trick of one of the boys in the shop; they are scamps, unless I mistake."

Bill, the man-of-all-work, came and removed the iron without asking any questions or saying anything about it. He did not know better than his master why the iron was there, and supposed Mr. Moran had guessed about right.

The party were ready, and soon after the iron had been taken away Mr. Moran drove his team and large wagon to the door for the passengers. He was rather proud of the horses and fond of driving, though not as careful and as safe a driver as Mike. The coachman was cool and far better acquainted with the spirited team than was its owner; the horses knew the hand of the man on the reins

better than they knew the hand of the master. Mr. Moran was very excitable, and readily lost control of himself in times of danger.

"Where is Mike?" asked Mrs. Moran, taking the back seat. "Why doesn't he come?"

"I sent him to do some other work," was the answer.

"Is not he going along?" inquired Mrs. Moran.

"No; I mean to drive," replied Mr. Moran, "and I don't need him. It is about time that this team knew its master. Mike has driven it long enough. If I am not to drive my own horses, I'd like to know the use of keeping them."

"I wish Mike were here," murmured Mrs. Moran, softly. "I'm afraid to have you drive those horses; they have not quieted down enough."

"That is the reason I wish to drive—that they may be quieted down. I intend driving my own team hereafter. There is another reason for leaving the coachman: I wish to take the whole party, and there is no room for him."

"I hope the horses will go," quietly sighed Mrs. Moran.

"May I sit back with mamma?" asked Eddie, Mr. Moran's favorite son. "I'll take care of her, and you may take Will in my place."

Consent being given, Eddie took the back seat. Each seat had three in it, Mrs. Moran, Eddie and a young lady sitting on the back seat, two other of Mr. Moran's children, with the wife of his friend,

sitting on the seat in the middle, while the two gentlemen and Will sat in front.

The ride was a delightful one, the road leading along the river, part of the time in sight of the water, while at other places the river was hidden only by a hill, and again the road turned off and ran through woods. The party enjoyed the excursion, as the horses went along gently, and even Mrs. Moran appeared to lose all her fear. Her husband, well pleased with his success in driving his spirited team, was as cheerful and happy as any of the company.

As the party were on their return, and not far from home, the road led down a hill. About halfway down this hill, and alongside of, but not far from, the road, lay a large stone. As Mr. Moran reached the hill a loaded wagon was ascending, and the driver kept in the middle of the road, giving the wagon coming down but little room for passing.

"Get out of the road there," shouted Mr. Moran, "and give me a chance to pass!"

The sharp tones startled the horses, which at once started to run in spite of Mr. Moran's efforts to hold them in. The whip of the driver of the team coming up, as he tried to hurry his horses out of the way, only added to the excitement of Mr. Moran's horses, and they became almost unmanageable. The wagons passed near the stone, but the one ascending the hill, not having given half the road, compelled Mr. Moran to pull out a little farther than he should.

The breaking of the Axle. Page 45.

To make sure of escaping the wagon he pulled his horses to the side, and the forward wheel struck the stone, but moved past it; the hind wheel hit the stone with a terrible blow, and the axle broke. The excited horses sprang forward with such force that the broken axle gave way entirely. With a mad plunge the animals leaped forward, throwing out Eddie, Mrs. Moran and the young lady. The others were carried a short distance farther, but the wild plunges of the team soon broke them loose from the wagon, and with the harness flying about them the frightened horses ran home, where they were caught. Though not seriously hurt, they were so spoiled by the fright and the accident that they could not afterward be driven without the greatest care, and were ready to run away at the slightest disturbance. The wagon, excepting the broken axle and a damaged wheel, was not badly injured.

Those of the party who remained in the wagon were scarcely hurt, but for a few minutes it was uncertain whether the three thrown out had not been killed; they lay quiet, and seemed to be dead. As quickly as possible the others came to them, and found each of the three breathing, but unconscious. The young lady soon became sensible, and showed that she was not badly hurt, but had been only stunned by the fall. Mrs. Moran was much bruised and had a broken arm, nor did she regain consciousness until she had been removed to her home. Eddie was injured more than any; he, too, soon became

sensible, but was unable to walk. A broken leg was not the worst of his injuries: the doctor said that his back had been hurt, and that it was uncertain whether he would ever be able to walk.

It is not the author's purpose to tell the history of the Morans, so what is of interest in this story regarding them may be told here. Mrs. Moran recovered her health, but Eddie, though he did not die from the injuries received, became a cripple for life.

After the accident Mr. Moran learned from Mike that the broken axle had been made of poor iron, but the coachman told only what he was asked to tell, and not what Mr. Rogers had requested him to say; so Mr. Moran did not learn all about the weak axle. He did not care to learn, probably, for he was very angry at Mr. Burhans, blaming him and his workmen for the accident; he was angry at the team for running away and angry at the man whose loaded wagon he regarded as partly to blame also for the accident. He was angry, too, to have it said that he was unable to drive his own team, but most of all it troubled him to see the sufferings of his wife and his favorite son. He did not stop to think of his own share of the blame.

Mr. Burhans learned through others that the strengthening plate had been removed by Mr. Moran's order, and so felt that neither himself nor his workmen were to blame for the broken axle, and no explanation was made by the blacksmith. The

wagon was repaired at another shop, whose owner, glad to get the work of Mr. Moran, tried to throw all blame for the accident upon Mr. Burhans. There were others ready to tell what they knew, and more of what they guessed, until Mr. Moran was determined to begin a lawsuit against Mr. Burhans for the injuries done to his wagon, his team, and especially to his wife and his son. The parents of some of the schoolboys were questioned, as well as the boys themselves, and Mr. Moran believed that he had a clear case. He was careful, however, to believe far more from those who spoke in his favor than from those who favored Mr. Burhans, though it happened that those who had been in the shop at the time of the repairing of the axle were all friends of the blacksmith.

While the accident made no little stir in Metona, the talk and the rumors that followed caused a great deal more excitement. It was settled that Mr. Moran meant to begin a lawsuit against Mr. Burhans for heavy damages, and would try to ruin the blacksmith. Among the witnesses were Mr. Hendricks, the teacher, and several of the boys of the school, all summoned in behalf of Mr. Moran.

If the trial caused earnest talk among the grown people of Metona, it created great excitement among the boys of the school. Before the day fixed the boys who were to be witnesses discussed anxiously what they would say and what they knew about the case. While all were friends of Mr. Burhans

rather than of Mr. Moran, they determined to tell the truth, hoping to do their friend as little harm as possible. The teacher warned his pupils to be careful to speak merely what they knew and to be very careful to tell the truth only, leaving results to the God of truth. Said he,

"You may wish, as witnesses, to help one side rather than the other, but remember that is not your business at the trial. You are called there to tell what you know. It will be the duty of the lawyers, the judge and the jury to decide the matter. Unless you speak the truth, and all of it as far as you know it, how can they decide fairly? It might be that the very things you supposed would injure the side you favored would be the facts needed to enable the jury to decide in favor of your friends."

"But all we know is against Mr. Burhans," urged Tom Wasson, "and we don't like to be witnesses against a man like him. Need we tell anything more than we are asked?"

"If told to tell all you know about the case, and if in your oath you say that you will do so, what would you call it if, after taking an oath to tell all that you know, you should keep back part of the truth?" asked the teacher.

Tom was silent: he knew that it would be difficult to answer the question and excuse himself for holding back as much as possible when told to tell all the truth; but he and the other boys had re-

solved to say as little as they could, though determined to tell only the truth.

"I do not think you need fear very much for Mr. Burhans," said the teacher. He is a good man and no doubt did, or had his men do, the best that could be done. He told me to tell you not to fear, but to tell all you know, as long as you speak the truth, and it will be all right. Perhaps Mr. Burhans knows what some of you are not aware of. He will not think any the less of you for telling the whole truth; he is not a man to wish any man or boy tell a lie to help him out of trouble."

There was a vacation given to the boys of Metona school on the day of the trial, and those who were called as witnesses went to the courtroom feeling their importance as they took their seats under the eye of some of their less-honored schoolmates. To be summoned to court as important witnesses in a trial that had already caused so much talk was an honor of which they were proud.

The case was called and opened; then the name of Thomas Wasson was called. The boys looked at their schoolmate with admiration, but Tom's pride had gone elsewhere. At first his face flushed as though all the blood meant to show itself; then he grew pale and his knees trembled, and he wished himself in the schoolroom or at home. Before he could summon courage to walk to the witness-stand his name was called again. Mr. Hendricks mo-

tioned him to go forward, and with steps that appeared steady Tom walked to the place where a chair was waiting for him. After the oath had been administered he was asked,

"Were you at Mr. Burhans's shop the day this accident happened?"

"Yes, sir," was his reply.

"Tell us what you heard there."

"I can't do it, sir."

"Why not?"

"I can't remember."

"Cannot you remember anything?"

"Yes, sir, but not all that I heard."

"Tell us the conversation between Mr. Burhans and his men."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"I didn't hear any."

"You did not? Be careful what you say; remember that you are under oath. Did not you hear any conversation between Mr. Burhans and his men?"

"No, sir."

"Why not? Did you try to listen?"

"Mr. Burhans was not there."

"Well, did you hear anything said about putting poor iron in an axle of a wagon?" asked the lawyer, showing his annoyance at what he saw was his own mistake.

"Yes, sir."

"Who said it?"

"Mr. Rogers, Mr. Burhans's foreman."

"What did he say? Repeat all the conversation you heard."

"I can't remember all."

"Then tell what you do remember. Did Mr. Rogers tell anybody to put poor iron into the axle? Do you remember that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, why don't you tell about it, then."

"I was waiting to see what part of it you wished me to tell."

"I wish you to tell all you heard. I want the truth, and all the truth, but nothing except the truth, which under your solemn oath you have declared you would tell."

A new idea had come to the boy's mind, and he asked,

"Do you wish me to tell all about it?"

"Certainly; that is what I am trying to find out."

"Well, Mike, Mr. Moran's man, came in and said that he must have that wagon done by five o'clock without fail, or Mr. Moran would not send any more work there."

"Never mind about Mr. Moran; you are to tell about Mr. Rogers."

"I thought you wanted to know all that was said?" replied Tom, looking innocently into the lawyer's face.

"I do wish to know all you heard Mr. Rogers

say about that axle, but you need not say anything about men who were not present."

"Well, Mike was there," spoke Tom, who was now gaining all his courage, "and I will have to tell what he said to keep track of what Mr. Rogers said, or else I sha'n't know how to tell it."

"Go on and tell it, then," replied the lawyer, sharply.

"Well, Mike said that if Mr. Rogers did not do the work right off he would lose Mr. Mo—he would lose work. Mr. Rogers said that he had no good iron in the shop, and if Mike would wait he would put in good iron; but Mike said he must put in what he had and trust to luck, and if it broke he'd have another job. Mr. Rogers then told John Varnel he'd have to put in the iron they had in the shop and to do the best he could with it. He said he did not like to have such work go out of the shop, but since Mr. Mo—since the work was wanted right off, they'd have to risk it. That's about all, as far as I can remember."

"Did not Mr. Rogers tell John Varnel to put in the iron and let Mr. Moran take the risk?"

"No, sir; Mr. Rogers is not that kind of a man."

"Never mind what kind of a man he is; your opinion was not asked as to that. Did Mr. Rogers tell Varnel to put poor iron in that axle. Did he tell him to make the axle of poor iron?"

"No, sir."

"What did he say, then? Did not you swear

just now that he ordered John Varnel to repair the axle with poor iron?"

"No, sir. Mr. Rogers told John Varnel they had no good iron in the shop and he must use what they had; but that it was poor and he did not want to use it; yet, since the wagon was wanted right away, he'd have to take that and heat it, and make it as good as he could for an axle."

"Did any one direct you what to say?" asked the lawyer, with impatience.

"Yes, sir."

"Who?"

"You did, sir."

"I? When did I tell you what to say?"

"Just now you told me to tell what I knew about that axle, and you said that you wanted me to tell the truth, and all of it, but nothing else."

"Of course I did," spoke the lawyer, "but that is not what I am trying to find out. I want to know if any one told you before you came here what you were to swear to and how you were to swear."

"Yes, sir."

"So somebody told you before you came what testimony you were to give? Be good enough to give the name of that person.'

"Now?"

"Yes, now, and here. Who was it, and what did he tell you to say? Perhaps you will not be as willing to tell that as you were to tell some other things you have sworn to here."

"I don't know what I have to be afraid of; I am willing to tell."

"Then tell. What are you waiting for?"

"For you to give me a good chance."

"You have the chance; go on. Who was it?

"Mr. Hendricks."

"What Mr. Hendricks?"

"My school-teacher."

"Your school-teacher, eh? Well, that is very good work for a school-teacher to be engaged in, is it not?—to tell a youth like you what to swear to in court and how to protect your friend."

"I suppose it is good work, or he would not have told me."

"Well, what did this good teacher of yours tell you to say?"

"He said that I must tell the truth about the axle, and tell all I knew, or else the judge and jury and lawyers would not know how to decide the case justly and aright. He said it was not my business to decide, but it was my business to tell the truth; so I thought I had better do as he told me. I am sorry if I've said what you didn't want me to say, but, since I promised to tell all the truth, I did not see how I could help your side any more than I could the other."

"That will do," said the lawyer; "I have nothing further to ask. I give the witness over to the other side."

"I have nothing to ask him," replied Mr. Bur-

hans's lawyer; "I am satisfied with his testimony as it stands, if my learned friend who has just questioned him is satisfied."

The next name called was that of Raymond Leigh. Raymond did not wait for the second call. After taking the oath and replying to several questions of less importance he was asked,

"Did you hear Mr. Rogers tell John Varnel to make that axle of poor iron and take the risk?"

"No, sir; I heard him say that there was no good iron for axles in the shop, and he must take what there was, because the work must be done at once."

"Did not Mr. Rogers say that Mr. Moran was a city-man and would not know the difference between good iron and poor iron?"

"No, sir."

"How do you know?"

"I did not hear him say anything like that."

"Oh! You are willing to swear that he did not say a thing because you did not happen to hear him say so. Is that it?"

"I mean that he did not say so while I was in the shop," answered Raymond, a little confused; "I don't know what he said while I was absent."

"Yet you meant to testify to what you had not heard, but I cautioned you. Is not that so?"

"No, sir; I meant to testify only to what I did hear."

"Then be careful what you say; remember that you are under oath, and tell only what you know.

Did Mr. Rogers tell John Varnel to make that axle of poor iron?"

"I don't know what he told him; I only know that he did not tell him to do so when I was in the shop."

"Did you hear him say it when you were outside of the shop?"

"No, sir."

"Did not you hear Mr. Rogers tell Varnel to make the axle of poor iron?"

"I heard him tell John Varnel to make the axle, and he said that the iron was not good—"

"Wait just there. You say that he said that the iron was not good. Now tell me, please, if iron that is not good be not poor iron?"

"I don't know whether iron is poor or rich," replied Raymond, indignantly; "I only know that I heard Mr. Rogers say that the iron was not good enough for an axle."

"Ah, yes! That is what I want to know. So Mr. Rogers said that the iron was not good enough for an axle, yet that Varnel must make an axle from it for Mr. Moran—that is, the foreman ordered to be put into Mr. Moran's wagon iron that he knew to be unfit for the work? That is exactly what we are trying to prove; you have sworn to that, remember. I think that will do.—Your Honor, I have done with the witness," said the lawyer, turning with a satisfied air to the justice.

"I think that the learned counsel has put into

the mouth of that witness a little more than he will accept as his statement," said the justice, noticing the look upon Raymond's face. "But if you have done with the witness, the counsel for defence has the opportunity to cross-question."

Hardly waiting for the reply of Mr. Moran's lawyer, the lawyer for Mr. Burhans turned to Raymond and asked,

"Did Mr. Rogers say anything about being sorry that Mr. Moran could not wait until better iron came, so that he might make a good axle for the wagon?"

"Yes, sir; he asked Mike to wait until good iron came, because he did not like to put into the axle the iron he had."

"What did Mike say then?"

"He told him that if he did not put that in and finish the work by five o'clock Mr. Moran would not send any more work to the shop."

"Did Mike say anything about going ahead and trusting to luck?"

"I object to that question," broke in the opposing lawyer. "The witness has said nothing about that, and the learned counsel proposes by our witnesses to bring in new evidence for his side."

"Very well," replied Mr. Burhans's lawyer; "but, as my memory goes, the first witness for the prosecution has already testified to that, and I merely wished to know whether or not his memory was defective. But I see that my learned friend is a little

sensitive regarding his witnesses, and I will spare him now what can as well be proved later."

The next witness was Mr. Hendricks. The boys were all listening closely as he gave his testimony, Tom and Raymond feeling sorry that he had not been called first, that they might have given their testimony as he did.

"Did you hear Mr. Rogers, the foreman of the shop, tell young Varnel to make the axle of defective iron?" asked Mr. Moran's counsel.

"I heard him say that there was no suitable iron in the shop for the work, but, since the axle must be made that afternoon, John must use what iron there was and make it as safe as possible," answered Mr. Hendricks.

"You understood, then, that the iron used in the axle was defective and yet the foreman ordered that iron to be used? Is not that so?"

"It is, with the additional statement—"

"Never mind about the additional statement; I wish my question answered, and do not ask any volunteer remarks from the witnesses. You understood that the iron used was defective and not fit for an axle of a wagon like the one to be repaired? Is that so?"

"I understood that before preparation for its work the iron to be used was defective."

"That is what I want to know, and do not desire to ask anything further."

Mr. Hendricks looked appealingly to the justice,

but was silent. Mr. Burhans's counsel, rising, asked of the judge,

"I appeal to Your Honor whether or not it be fair to stop a witness in the midst of a sentence and compel him to testify to that which may be, according to his judgment, unfair and untruthful. I am not favoring the side of my worthy opponent's client, but think if he must gain testimony for his case in that way it is the best evidence we need to prove that he feels his case to be hopeless."

"This is not the time for such remarks," replied the justice; "yet I agree with the counsel who has just spoken that the counsel for the prosecution is not giving the witness a fair opportunity to tell, as he promised, the whole truth. The witness will please complete the statement he was about to make as to the defective condition of the iron before its use."

"Mr. Hendricks, you may tell us what else you had to say about that iron," said Mr. Moran's lawyer. "But remember that you have already testified that it was known by Mr. Rogers to be defective before he ordered it to be used for an axle of a wagon to carry a load of passengers."

"It was defective before it was prepared for an axle," spoke Mr. Hendricks, "but Mr. Rogers ordered Varnel to heat it and make the iron as good as he could before using it."

"Did you see him heat the iron and make it any better?"

"No, sir, I did not; I left before that work was done."

"So you know nothing about that? All you know about that axle, and all to which you can testify, is that defective iron was to be used for the work?"

"I do know more: I know that Mr. Rogers ordered the iron to be made as strong as possible."

"Yes, but you do not know that the order was obeyed. You do not know but that it was said while you were present and for your ears only. But no matter; that will do."

Nicholas Griffin was called. After other questions he was asked by Mr. Moran's lawyer,

"Did you hear anybody say that Mr. Moran was a fool and could easily be cheated with a poor axle?"

"No, sir."

"Did you not hear anybody say that day in the shop that Mr. Moran was a fool? Think carefully before you answer."

"I heard James Smart say something about Mr. Moran, but heard nothing of the kind by Mr. Rogers."

"Well, what did this James Smart say?"

"He said that when city people come into the country they feel as big as peacocks on a fence, and are about as foolish, or something like that."

"And it was not Mr. Rogers nor John Varnel who said it?"

"No, sir."

"But why did James Smart say that Mr. Moran is a fool?"

"I don't know, unless it was because he thought it was so."

"Well, you know that it is not so; do you not?"

"No, sir."

"No, sir—what?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know what?"

"Don't know what you mean."

"Perhaps you do not know much, any way?"

"I know enough to tell the truth."

"It takes a smart man to tell a lie smoothly."

"I don't know anything about that, but suppose you do, sir."

"See here! What do you boys mean by such insulting replies? I have received more insults to-day from you schoolboys than it has been my lot to endure for many a day."

"I didn't mean to insult you, sir," replied Nick, in a meek tone of voice, "but I took oath that I would tell the truth."

"Since you are so anxious to tell the truth, and all of it, I wish you to tell me whether or not you boys have talked together as to what testimony you would give and how you could save Mr. Burhans? He is a friend of yours, I think, is he not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Has he told you what to testify?"

"No, sir; he has not said a word to us about the trial."

"How do you know what he has said to the others?"

"I know what they have said about it."

"Then you boys have talked about it? Well, what did you agree to do?"

"We agreed to tell the truth."

"No matter how much it injured your friend?"

"We did not want to injure him, but we meant to tell the truth, no matter who was hurt."

"Who told you to tell the truth?"

"Mr. Hendricks said that we were not called on to decide the trial, but to tell the truth to help others decide it."

When Mr. Moran's witnesses had all been called, there was surprise that Mike had not been among them; but the surprise was greater when, later in the trial, he was summoned for Mr. Burhans. The first witness, however, for the blacksmith was John Varnel. He testified to the facts as the reader has learned them, but was not asked about the plate fastened over the weak part of the axle. Mr. Rogers, who was called later, told that Mr. Burhans, coming in when the wagon was nearly ready, ordered the addition to make it strong. He also told that Mr. Burhans had ordered Mike to be told to inform Mr. Moran that the axle was not made of the best iron, though it had been made as strong as possible and the plate added to make it safe, and, further,

that Mike had been told that as soon as Mr. Moran could spare the wagon a new axle would be put in for nothing.

"Was that axle, in your judgment, safe?" asked the lawyer.

"It was, with the plate fastened under; but without this it was not safe for a heavy load."

"Why did you order it put in at all?"

"Mr. Burhans not being at home, I hardly knew whether to risk the loss of a good customer or the injury that might follow an accident. But I knew that with ordinary use the iron would be strong enough. I think I should have refused to repair the wagon had the shop been mine. I was not certain that the iron would not stand the use to which it would be put, but did not wish to take any risk."

"Would the axle, with the added plate, have stood the jar and strain of the accident?"

"That is hard to tell; such accidents might break the best iron in the world. I cannot tell without knowing more of the circumstances."

"After you had informed him of its weakness, did Mr. Moran's coachman tell you to put in the iron?"

"Yes, sir; he said I must use it and trust to luck. He said that he must have the wagon by five o'clock."

The next witness after Mr. Rogers was Mike the coachman; he gave his testimony with no little hesitation, yet gave the facts. He told how he had

tried to tell Mr. Moran about the weakness of the axle, but was ordered off to work at once, and, supposing that the iron would be perfectly safe with the plate added, gave himself no further trouble about it. He said, in answer to questions, that he had told Mr. Moran later of the message sent by Mr. Burhans, but, as it was after the accident, of course the harm had been done.

The last witness was Bill. He told how Mr. Moran had ordered him to take off the iron plate, and that he had obeyed, leaving the axle weakened and unfit for its work.

This closed the testimony. The jury decided that Mr. Moran had no cause for action, and, as the boys said, "cleared Mr. Burhans."

The next day, at school, there was little talk about anything besides the trial. The boys were delighted that Mr. Burhans had come off victorious, and met in his shop at noon to congratulate him on his success.

"I am glad, boys, to see your interest in me," said the blacksmith, "and no less glad to find that you who testified were so decided in telling the truth. Remember that by telling the truth, and the whole truth, you proved to be my best friends. Never try to shield a friend by hiding the truth when it should be known; nothing harms an honest man more than to have only part of the truth about him told."

"Why were not you a witness, Jim?" asked Tom of James Smart.

"I guess the boss thought I'd give that city feller 'Hail, Columbia!' if I got talkin'," replied James. "I said that I'd just like a chance to tell what I knowed about him, but the boss said he guessed he'd have enough without me. He did, too, and I'm glad of it. He's good—for a boss—I tell you."

This was said after Mr. Burhans had gone for his dinner, when the boys were waiting in the shop for school to begin.

"Well, if you had been there, you would have been glad to have gotten away," said Tom. "I never was so scared in my life. After a while I felt easy, and I just wanted to say some things back to that lawyer. He wanted to catch us fellows, and I didn't know but he'd got me two or three times, when the people laughed; but I guessed they didn't think I was so badly caught when I looked into that man's face and saw how red it was. He didn't like some things that we boys said, I guess."

"Why should he? You said what hit hard, I tell you," spoke Will Oster.

"He didn't seem to like some things you fellows said," responded John Swart, "because they were just what he wished kept still."

"No matter; he needn't have asked so many questions, then," said Nick.

CHAPTER III.

THE BORROWER.

AFTER the accident Mr. Hendricks said little to the boys: he believed that they would draw their own lesson—and a wise one—without any help from him; but after the trial teacher and pupils had a talk together. During his talk the teacher said,

"We have all had a lesson showing how far-reaching may be the results of a weak place in our characters. That one weak spot in a wagon has caused a great deal of expense and no little trouble in the community. It has caused difficulty between good men; it has caused a great deal of pain and sorrow to innocent people; it has made a cripple for life of a noble boy and imperiled the lives of several persons. If a weak place in a wagon can do so much harm, what may not a weak place in a human character do? Far more may depend on your character than can depend on a wagon's strength. When once the weakness is there, it is impossible to tell when it will be shown, but the time may be that of greatest responsibility. See to it, boys, that every part of your character is good

and strong. Build only of the best material, remembering that the lives of men may depend on what you put into your characters to-day. Remember, too, that character is built of small things —of little principles, of tiny decisions. You may think that what you do to-day has little effect on its formation, but you cannot know just where that act, that thought, that principle, will appear and make itself felt in your living. So you cannot tell what influence the acts of to-day may have in the future upon others."

"Are we responsible for all we do, whether we meant to do it or not?" inquired Raymond.

"We are responsible so far as it was in our power to know whether or not we should have done as we did," answered the teacher. "Ignorance can be an excuse only when by doing our best we could not find out what we ought to do. We are responsible not only for doing and not doing, but for knowing and not knowing. It is our duty to learn all that we can, and then to act according to our best judgment."

"Mr. Hendricks, how long are we responsible?" asked Raymond. "I mean for how much and how far are we responsible? Somebody begins an evil; is he responsible for all that results from it, no matter how long the evil keeps on?"

"Yours is a hard question, Raymond. Responsibility comes in with each one who helps on that evil, yet, had it not been started, the first one would

have been free from responsibility not only, but he would have saved from responsibility the others who helped on the evil. By beginning an evil you may be not merely the author of that evil, but may start in the way of helping the evil farther on others who might otherwise have remained good. It is like a small ball of snow rolling on the mountain-side: it gathers as it goes, and soon becomes an avalanche to sweep down and ruin all in its track. While the first handful of snow is not responsible for the injury done, yet had it not started there might have been no avalanche. It began the work of destruction, and others help it; all combined brought the ruin; all combined must share the responsibility; but there could have been no responsibility, as there would have been no destruction, had not the first snowball begun the work. It certainly should bear the greater part of the blame, but not all of it, because it alone could not have done the work of destruction. So the man who starts an evil could do little were not others willing to help, but they might never have begun had he done nothing."

"Suppose somebody starts an evil, but doesn't mean to start one; is he responsible for all that comes of it?" asked Tom.

"Suppose a man sets a house on fire, but does not intend doing it, and the building burns up; who must be responsible if he is not?" asked Will Oster. "I guess you can't blame any one else."

"Your question is very much like Raymond's,

Thomas," replied the teacher, "and that I have just answered as well as I can. We are responsible as far as we know or may be able to learn how to prevent the evil that results from our acts."

"Well, I guess a fellow must keep both eyes open even while he sleeps," said Tom, "if he wishes to keep from being responsible for wrong done. I have heard people call this a hard world, and I begin to see it."

"It is a hard world, Thomas, to those who are careless and to those who propose going in their own strength, but it is not so difficult to do right when we are living from Christian principle and trusting in a power mightier than our own and mightier than our enemies. With decided principles, firm, strong character in every part and trusting in the strength of God, no one need fear that he cannot pass safely, and successfully too, through this world."

"I do wish I had a character made of iron or of spring steel," spoke Tom; "then I might go ahead all right."

"Even with the best of character you must not forget to keep it always in use, or it will become weakened. Idleness, Thomas, might rust and destroy even a steel character," said the teacher. "It must be kept bright by activity and every part strong by careful watching. Begin your characters aright, and it will be easy to keep them good. God has given you opportunities to do so in youth,

and he wishes you to use each opportunity, for he has work for you later."

"Mr. Hendricks, do you suppose that is what we are here for?" asked Raymond.

"That is part of the object God has in view, I have no doubt," replied the teacher; "though, of course, he intends each one to be happy and to become fitted for a better life beyond this."

"I never thought much about it," spoke Raymond, "but supposed we are here to get all the good we can out of the world."

"Did you ever examine your watch and ask yourself why it is made so complicated yet so perfect a timepiece?" asked the teacher.

"To keep perfect time," replied Raymond.

"Every part has its place and each its work, but all for one great purpose, and that to keep good time?" suggested the teacher.

"Yes, sir; I suppose so."

"So are we parts of the great machinery of this world, each having his place and each having something to do, but all to form parts of one great plan that our Maker has in mind. Each is made to do his part in the great work that God has for human beings in this world, and to complete that plan, to carry on that work to perfection, each one must do well his part. Now, if one does not do his part, but cares only for his own pleasure, what must be the result?"

"If we all form part of one great purpose, then,

if one do not do his part, the whole must be imperfect; but I do not understand why we should care more for God's plan than for our own good," replied Raymond.

"If you make anything," said Mr. Hendricks, "you have a right to expect it to do something for you, have you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Our Creator, then, expects us to do something for him, but that something is really for our fellowmen and for ourselves; for we cannot for the good of others do anything that will not directly or indirectly do good to ourselves. Would not you think less of the great Creator if he cared nothing for man or allowed him to live and help himself as best he could? Would not your idea of God be less exalted could you believe that he has no plan whatever for man to work out? Would you not think he had but a poor opinion of us if he allowed us to do as we would, perish or be saved as we could, without his help? Would not you think less of yourself if you supposed that God did not care enough for you to ask you to help him in his work? But I will put it in another form. Does it not give a higher idea of ourselves to think that God cares so much for us that he wishes us to help him make this world better? Does it not give you a better idea of the excellence and worth of mankind when you think that God not only has a grand plan to exalt them, but takes us into that plan and requires

us to help him carry it out? Which is the nobler view of life, to regard it as merely meant for gratification, or for working with the great Maker of man to restore him to the position from which by sin he fell? But it is the hour now to turn to the lessons. At another time we may speak further of this."

A day or two after this talk there was whispering in the seats occupied by John Smart, Will Oster, Tom Wasson and James Relyea.

"What is the matter, John?" asked the teacher. "Why are you boys whispering?"

"Somebody's stolen my pencil," replied John, "and I asked James if he had it. He has one like it, and I thought it looked like mine."

"I haven't his pencil, nor have I seen it," replied James, angrily. "I don't steal pencils; I buy mine when I want any."

"Not so harshly, James. Think how your words may sound," said Mr. Hendricks. "That is hardly a reply you would like John to give you if you supposed he had your pencil."

"Well, some one has taken mine, and I don't know who has it," spoke John. "I had it yesterday, and left it there when school closed last night; I'm sure of that."

"Perhaps we can find your pencil," said the teacher, quietly.—"Has any one in the school seen anything of a stray pencil?—What kind of a pencil was it, John?"

"It was one with red and white stripes, and had

'J. H. S.' cut in the wood. I would know it if I saw it."

"Has any one seen anything of a lead-pencil having 'J. H. S.' cut in it and belonging to John Swart?" asked Mr. Hendricks.

For a moment there was silence, and then Raymond Leigh looked up and asked,

"Is it John's lead-pencil that is lost? I have that. I borrowed it this morning, and forgot to take it back. I came to my seat before school and did not find any in my desk, so took John's before he came, and forgot to say anything to him after he came. Here it is."

"Is this your pencil, John?" asked the teacher, handing it to John.

"Yes, sir; that's the one. I saw 'J. H. R.' on the one that James has, and thought it was mine. I see I was wrong."

After the pencil had been returned there was quiet in the school, but at recess one of the boys said to Raymond,

"That wasn't fair in you, Raymond, to let John hunt for his pencil and make a row about it, while you had it in your desk."

"I did not notice that John was hunting for the pencil," replied Raymond; "I was busy with an example in arithmetic. I don't wish to put John or any other boy to trouble.—You know that yourself, John, don't you?"

"I don't suppose you meant to get me into trou-

ble, nor would there have been any trouble had you returned the pencil when you were done with it. Or if you had asked before taking it, I would not have made the mistake of telling Jim that he had my pencil."

"Say, Raymond," spoke Will Oster: "we are not now at the business of criticising; but if we were, I'd tell you that one of your faults is to borrow of a fellow when he is away."

"That's so," said Ed Lasher; "that is a weak place in your character."

"Say, fellows," replied Raymond, "how often do you propose telling a boy of his faults? Is it not time that you give me a chance to rest?"

"Of course it is time that Raymond takes a rest," said Tom, "and I, for one, propose that as soon as he stops borrowing we will say not another word about his borrowing when the owner is not present, or borrowing when the owner is there without returning.—Who should begin, Raymond?"

"The best-natured one, I think," answered Raymond; and so for the time the matter was ended.

Some time after this one of the boys missed his ink. His uplifted hand was followed by the announcement to the teacher,

"Mr. Hendricks, I can't find my ink. It was here yesterday, but I can't find it anywhere now."

"Has any one seen Benjamin Turck's ink?" asked Mr. Hendricks.

"There it stands, on Raymond Leigh's desk,"

answered the boy whose seat was near that of Raymond, who happened to be absent from school that day.

"Go and get your ink, Benjamin," said Mr. Hendricks.—"Boys, be careful not to take anything from one another's desk without returning it."

"It is not the rest so much as Raymond Leigh," said Benjamin; "he is always borrowing, no matter whether we are here or not. If he wishes a thing, he takes it, and brings it back when he gets done with it; but that usually is when we ask for it."

"It will be better to bring charges against Raymond when he is present," replied the teacher. "Never, unless it be absolutely necessary, bring charges publicly against any one in his absence."

Some days later Nick Griffin held up his hand in the school and said,

"I cannot find some paper that I left in my desk two days ago."

"Are you sure you left the paper in your desk?" asked Mr. Hendricks.

"Yes, sir. I know it was there, for I put it to one side because I knew I should need it for work."

"Have you looked carefully and made sure that it is not under some of your books or within them?"

"Yes, sir; I have looked through my desk and into every book, but can't find it. I know exactly where I put it the last thing night before last; and

when I looked this morning, as I opened my desk, I saw that no paper was there."

"Does any boy in school know about Nicholas's paper?" asked the teacher.

For a few moments there was perfect silence in the room; then Raymond looked up and, seeing several faces turned toward him, spoke:

"Did you ask about Nick's paper, Mr. Hendricks? If you did, I can tell about that, for I took it yesterday. I had none and wanted some, so borrowed from Nick's desk. I meant to get some this morning and pay back, but forgot it. I will get some at noon."

"I am sorry, Raymond, that you took that paper without asking Nicholas," said the teacher.

"I would have asked him, but he was not at school yesterday, and none of the other boys whom I asked had any paper that they could spare," replied Raymond.

"I think you should not borrow so much, especially when the owner is absent," said Mr. Hendricks. "You will remember that a similar complaint has been made more than once before in the school."

"I am sorry that I forgot," answered Raymond, "and in future will try to be more careful."

Though the teacher dismissed the matter, the boys did not; at noon they asked Raymond if he did not mean to get Nick's paper.

"Oh yes; I forgot," was his reply. "But I

will wait now until after school.—I'll get it, Nick, and give you an extra sheet for interest."

"I don't care for interest," responded Nick, "but I do care about fellows going into my desk when I am away. How can I feel sure that I'll find anything there if I am away for a day? I wish you would wait to ask a fellow, and not borrow till he's there to say 'Yes' or 'No.'"

"You should at least return what you borrow, Raymond," said John Swart. "It puts a fellow in a bad fix sometimes, and you ought to think of that."

"I don't mean to keep your things, fellows," replied Raymond, "but I have such a poor memory that I really can't do what I mean to do. I hear so much about my not paying back that I am getting tired of it."

"Why not just stop the talk by getting tired of borrowing, Raymond?" said Tom. "I would get so tired that I would say I'd never borrow again in my life. I hate to have folks dinning at me too. Grandmother is always telling me about my faults. No, not always," added he, in a lower tone, "but she used to be. I am trying to improve."

"So am I, Tom, but it is hard, and I don't seem to gain a bit," answered Raymond.

"I'll tell you what I think of this forgetting, Raymond," spoke James Relyea: "if a fellow tries hard to remember, he'll do it after a while. When did you ever hear of a boy forgetting about Christ-

mas or Fourth of July or a show or some fun? Forget? I never forget such things."

"I mean to try to remember," said Raymond, "and will be glad if you fellows will help me."

"I'll help, Raymond, with all my might; but where shall I take hold?" said Tom, taking off Raymond's hat and pulling up his hair.

"Not of my hair, Tom, any way."

"Well, I thought perhaps your head was full and I'd try to give more room. The Indians used to lift off the scalps of people, and thus give another a chance to grow."

"Pshaw, Tom! you know that a new scalp will not grow to take the place of the old one," said Will Oster.

"I didn't say it would."

"What did you say, then?"

"I said that one was taken away, giving another a chance to grow."

"Oh, Tom, that's some of your nonsense," said Bennie.

"Of course it is *my* nonsense; whose else should it be?"

"Tom, if I should get rid of the habit of forgetting," spoke Raymond, "you should get rid of trying to sell people and of talking nonsense."

"I'm willing to make a bargain with you, Raymond: I will stop joking with people and selling them if you will stop borrowing and forgetting to pay back."

"Forgetting is my nature, Tom, and it will be impossible to remember everything just at the right time," replied Raymond.

"Well, joking is my nature too, Raymond, and yet I am ready to change my nature—or to try for it, at least. But say, boys: is it wrong to joke? What do you think?"

"That depends on how much and how far you carry a joke," answered Will Oster. "A good joke now and then to harm nobody is not wrong, but sometimes persons joke at the wrong time and with the wrong kind of people. Some people will not take a joke."

"That's so, boys, and some can't. Why, I've seen men, and women too, who didn't know a joke from an octopus."

"Hello, Nick! where did you get that name? What is an octopus?" asked Bennie. "Are they good to eat? How do you cook them?"

"Don't think of your stomach, Ben, every time a new thing is spoken of. But you all remember that Mr. Hendricks told us a few weeks ago that an octopus is a strange kind of fish—a kind of eight-footed or eight-armed monster that squeezes to death everything that it takes hold of, and sucks the life out of it while killing it."

"That is, it kills it while taking its life you mean, Nick, do you?" inquired Bennie.

"See here, Ben! If a fellow don't use exactly the right word, remember that other folks are not

perfect, either. But you know that Mr. Hendricks said an evil habit is like an octopus: it slowly puts its arms around us and takes the life out. He didn't say it just that way, but that was what he meant."

"I don't think joking wrong," said Raymond, "if not carried too far or continued too constantly. Some are always joking, and are ready to joke about everything. They do not seem to know how to do anything else."

"I'd rather hear a joker than a grumbler," spoke Will. "A grumbler is the chap to keep at a distance; he is the fellow who makes the world more trouble than all the jokers you can rouse up."

"How does he give trouble, Will?" asked Raymond.

"Why, he makes every one dissatisfied with self, and with all things outside of self. Just set a fellow to looking up all the faults he can find in the people around him; and if he don't make lively times for his friends, then I'm mistaken. If I wanted to make men miserable, I'd just let loose a lot of grumblers on them; and if they wouldn't long for the time to come when something would happen to themselves or the grumblers, then I don't know. There's old Mr. Burgnut; if he can't make a company miserable, I don't know who can. He sees everything bad long before it appears, and then he sees twice as much as does happen. If anything is good in the eyes of others, he is sure to see plenty of evil there too, and he tells about it."

"Hold on, Will! You are too severe on old Mr. Burgnut. He may grumble now and then, but he is a kind-hearted old man, after all," said Raymond. "Go to him in time of trouble and see how ready he is to help. He wouldn't turn a beggar from his door without feeding and warming him."

"Yes," interrupted Tom, "he would feed and warm him not only with food and clothing, but with all the stories of evil and with every foreboding he could think of. He would make a beggar wish to starve rather than go to his house again. Tell him that this world is not going to ruin! And, as for boys, why he believes that they are at least a thousand times as bad as when he was a boy, and he says they were as bad then as they well could be."

"That means that the capacity of boys has increased a thousand times since then," suggested Nick. "But had you not better say only nine hundred and seventy times, Tom? You see, a thousand is a trifle large for the time-allowance. Always put your figures a little below the facts, or people may be inclined to doubt them."

"Well, yes, Nick, I believe, for your sake, I will throw off forty rather than thirty, making the whole amount nine hundred and sixty," replied Tom. "It does require no little faith to believe to be right an answer that is so unlike that which you have found to be correct. But no matter, Nick; some answers

take into account a part of the problem that may have escaped your notice."

"That is hardly fair, Tom, to twit Nick about his mistake in that problem," spoke Raymond. "Any one may make a mistake and fail to see it until told."

When the fall term of the Metona school opened —in the time of which we write school-terms began earlier than now after the summer vacation—some of the boys of the school agreed to spend a Saturday afternoon along the river, not far from the village; they had a large boat and a small one, with which they enjoyed several happy hours sailing on the water.

"What do you boys say to a race?" asked Raymond when they came ashore and had rested. "There would be some fun in that."

"I'm in for it," replied Tom and several others, while John asked,

"Where will you get another boat? We can't race with these two. The big boat is all right for taking a load and for fellows who cannot keep themselves quiet, but who wants to pull that against the small one?"

"That's so," responded Will. "If we had two boats that were of a size, we might try it, and I would be one to pull an oar, but I am not ready to row that big heavy thing against any who take the smaller boat. But let Bennie Turck and me take

the small boat and six of you fellows may row the large one, and we will beat you."

"I'm ready to take the small boat," said Tom, "with any other fellow you may choose, and we two will beat any whom you can put into the big boat. It would not be a fair race; she is too heavy and luggy. She is a first-rate boat in a storm, but don't talk of racing with her. My! I'd as soon propose to race an ox against a racehorse as to put that boat against the little Swift. She has her right name, I tell you; she can run if men who know how pull the oars."

"Who might those men be, Tom? Does the name of one begin with T and of the other with N?" asked Nick.

"Well, yes, Nick, or any other good fellow. I guess you and I might send the Swift right along if we had the oars. She has learned to know us by this time. But Bennie Turck ought to be one who rows the Swift, seeing it is his father's boat."

"Oh, I don't care to row if any of you boys want to try. I get rowing and racing enough, and would as lief sit on the shore to see the fun and hurrah for the best rowers," replied Bennie.

"But where is the other boat to come from?" asked John. "I am ready to row or to sit ashore and see the fun, but I would just like to see a race; and then we might take a swim, for we must have one more swim before we go home."

"Say, fellows! I can tell you what to do," said

Raymond. "Why not take the Middy, Mr. Sherman's boat? She lies at her stake around the Point. Don't you remember we saw her when we came by? We can have her, I know. Mr. Sherman has let me have her more than once, and I know he will let me again."

"But Mr. Sherman is not at home," replied Will. "He went away this morning with his wife and all the family; I saw them go. And they have gone to stay over Sunday. There is no one home to ask, so we can't get the Middy, and there's no other boat around equal to the Swift."

"If that's all, we need not lose our race," spoke Raymond, "for Mr. Sherman will not need his boat, and I know he'd be perfectly willing to let us take it; so I propose that we go and get it, and tell him afterward."

"I will not get it without asking," said Tom, "though I suppose he would let us have the Middy if he were here."

"I am not afraid to get her," replied Raymond; "and if you fellows will race with me and two others, I will get the Middy and run all risk."

"I'm ready," spoke Tom and John and Will, and two or three other boys.

"But *you* must get the boat, Raymond," said James Relyea. "I don't think Mr. Sherman would be as well pleased were any one else to take it without his permission. He likes you better than he does some of us."

"Who will go along?" asked Raymond. "I will get the Middy loose and bring her here."

"I'll row, Raymond, and you loosen the boat and hold the rope; then you must see that she is safely back again, and we'll do the rest," said James.

"That's all right," responded Raymond; "I'm not afraid to do in Mr. Sherman's absence what I know he would let me do were he here.—Come along, James."

"Wait, Raymond; I'll go along to help row too," called John.

In a short time the three boys were out of sight around the Point, and in a few minutes more John, rowing the Swift, and James, sitting in her stern, came around the Point with the Swift, and closely following came Raymond rowing the Middy. The two boys were racing, as each pulled with all his strength at the oars, while James in the Swift urged his companion to pull with all his might, as the Middy was gaining. When the boys came to the place where their companions were waiting, the Middy was ahead.

"Hurrah for the Middy!"—"Hurrah for Raymond!" shouted the boys as the boats came ashore.

"Two men in the Swift and only one in the Middy, and yet, after giving them a good start, the Middy has beat!" shouted Tom.

"'Two men'!" grumbled James. "But what did I do? I had no oars; I only made the load heavier."

"Can't help that," replied Tom. "You were the captain and bossed the job; so the Swift should have beat. We all know that when a man has a boss watching him he does more work than when he is at it alone. It was a bad beat, Jim, I tell you. But no matter; let's try again."

"Who's going to row?" asked Raymond. "We can't all go. What do you say to two or three races? We can go three in each boat—two to pull, and one to steer. I brought the Middy's rudder along.—Has the Swift a rudder, Bennie?"

"Yes, but we don't often use it," replied Bennie. "I can get it if you want it. But I don't care to go; I'll sit on the shore and be umpire and hurrah for the boat that beats. But if you boys want to beat the Swift, you will have to be doing, I tell you. I've rowed her against the Middy more than once, and know that she can go as fast as Mr. Sherman's boat any time."

"You're right, Bennie, if you only have enough strong men at the oars," answered Tom. "If you and I take her, we can make her spin along, I tell you. Or I'm willing to try with any other fellow. I am not afraid of the Middy."

"Well, who's going?" asked Raymond. "Any of you fellows who wish may try the Middy first, but I want to try one race too with her. She may not beat the Swift, but she will come alongside in a race; I know that. They are both as good boats as I want to race with."

"Raymond, suppose you, Jim and I take the Middy, and you steer?" suggested John. "You pulled her up here and showed how you can row; so let Jim and me have a chance.—What do you say, Jim?"

"I am ready to row her," replied James. "Since Raymond got her, he ought to be captain."

"All right, if the rest say so," answered Raymond. "But I am willing to let others take the first chance."

"No; you be captain of the Middy, Raymond, and let Jim and John row. Then Nick and Bennie and I will take the Swift; and if we don't beat you, it will be because something's the matter.—What do you say, Ben?" asked Tom.

"I don't care to row," replied Bennie; "but here's the rudder for the Swift. Let some one go in my place.—Here, Will! you are a good rower; you and Nick pull, while Tom steers the Swift and Raymond the Middy. That will be a fair race. The rest of us will watch on the shore. I'll be umpire, if you say so."

"We don't need any umpire," answered Tom; "we mean to do this thing fairly. Umpires are for keeping watch on those who mean to cheat."

"Not for those alone, Tom," said Raymond, "for there often comes a difference of opinion between those who are the most honorable; and the umpire is the man to settle it fairly, and to satisfy both sides. But I guess we don't need any umpire

here; you boys on the shore will see whether or not we are racing fairly."

The race was arranged with Tom steering the Swift and Raymond the Middy, while James and John rowed her; and Nick and Will were at the oars of the Swift.

"Now, boys," said Raymond when the boats were ready to start, "I'll keep my eyes on the Swift, and you just keep yours on your oars."

"I'd like to know why we can't watch her as we leave her behind," spoke John. "We can't help seeing her, anyhow."

"You'll have to turn around on your seats to do it," replied Tom, in the best of humors. "You may need glasses to see us after a while, when we leave you astern."

"Brag is the best thing to begin with, Tom," responded Raymond.

"You wait, and you will see that it is not brag, but prophecy," said Tom.

"Don't pull too fast nor get excited; don't heed the shouts of the fellows, but just keep your minds made up to win," continued Raymond, advising his crew. "Pull steadily; take long strokes and dip your oars fairly in the water. Take a good grip on your oars and keep cool; then see if we do not beat them.—All ready, Bennie," he called to Bennie Turck, who had been chosen to give the word to start, "if Tom is."

"Been waiting ever so long for you," replied

Tom. "We are getting tired, and will have to go on soon and declare the race ours if you don't start within an hour."

"Are you all ready?" called Bennie to the boys in the boats.

"All ready," came the answer.

"Then one, two, three, go!" shouted Bennie.

At the word "go!" the two boats shot forward as each rower, striking his oars into the water, pulled with all his might to make his own boat take the lead; but so evenly matched were the oarsmen and so equal the boats that for a while neither side seemed likely to win the race. The cheers of the boys on shore inspired the boatmen to do their best, and as now the name of the Swift and then that of the Middy was shouted each rower strained to his utmost to force his boat ahead of the other. James and John became excited, but the quieting words of Raymond, "Steady, boys! don't make a misstroke. Don't hurry, and rock the boat. Don't hurry, but make each stroke tell," had their effect.

Tom tried to keep cool too, and for a few moments succeeded, but the shouts of the others on shore, with the fact that his boat was even with the other, made him think that by a little extra effort she could be forced ahead; so he called out to Nick and Will:

"Pull away, fellows! You are keeping even. A little more work, and you'll pass them. They are doing all they can. A little harder, Nick, a

little stronger, Will, and we shall lead them. Go in for beating, even if it makes you puff. The Swift is good for the Middy, and with a little more power on the oars she will come out ahead. What do you say? Can you do it?"

The boys were doing all they could already, and began now to pull with less steadiness. This caused the Swift to rock, and slowly the other boat pushed its bow ahead. Raymond noticed this, and, speaking calmly, said,

"Steady, boys! You are going ahead, but don't hurry; don't let her rock. Pull just the same as you have done. No matter if you can't see what is going on; you are beating. Only don't lose by being in a hurry. Don't cheer; don't say a word. Keep your breath for winning the race. You can cheer when you are through."

To see the other boat pass his was too much for Tom. The shouts of those on shore, "Hurrah for the Middy!" added to his excitement, and he cried out,

"They are going ahead, fellows! Do you mean to let them do it? Put in, Nick, give a little more muscle, Will, and we'll catch up and pass them yet. Pull away with all the strength you can scare up. You can do it. The Swift is not the boat to be beaten, with us in it. Scoop out the water with your oars, boys, and shove her along. Push her ahead, or they'll beat us, sure as preaching! They are gaining right along. Hold on! You are rocking

her now and losing headway. You are losing stroke.—Be careful, or you will lose an oar, Nick! Steady! Keep cool!—My! don't rock so. We are coming in second, so sure as we are in a race."

By this time the Middy was taking the lead and the boys on shore were some distance away, but their shouts, though more faint, could easily be heard, and the cries, "What's the matter, Tom! Where are you going? Do you mean to let the Middy beat like that?" aroused Tom and his two rowers almost to frenzy, and the boat rocked yet more. But soon the steersman came to his better judgment and tried to quiet himself as well as his men.

"See here, boys!" said he; "we are losing all the time because the boat rocks so. You are getting excited. Now get down to a steady pull. I will move with each stroke of your oars. Look at me; as I lean forward put your oars ahead, and as I straighten up pull. That will bring you down to be steady. We can't let them beat us in this way; we'll never hear the last of it. Now see what you can do. Don't hurry. We'll gain on them, and maybe catch up before we get to the end on the return. They are putting in as hard as they can, and may be so tired that we can pass them yet if you keep up your strength. Try it."

With the movement of his body the two boys moved their oars forward and backward far more steadily, and the rocking ceased. Tom thought

best not to say whether the Swift gained or lost, but cheered the two boys by telling them to keep on quietly, for they were near the point where, in the water, stood a stake around which each boat must go before returning on the home-course. By the time the Middy was coming around the stake the Swift was approaching it. The first boat had passed from the inside, while Tom was steering to pass on the outside. Opposite the stake the two boats were in danger of coming together, but Tom turned his inside the Middy and just escaped that boat, but the oarsmen as they passed were unable to row. The Middy with slackening speed went on her way, while the Swift was quickly and in a very narrow circle turning about the stake. When Tom's boat was on her way back, the other was only three or four lengths ahead, and not gaining at all.

"We have gained, boys, half our distance; and if you keep steady and don't let the boat rock, you'll catch them yet before we reach the end. It wasn't the rule to run inside the Middy, but it had to be done. We were closer in than they, and had I tried to pass on the right side they must have stopped or run into us. So it was as fair to them as to us, only by the stop we gained a short turn around the stake, and so have made up half what we lost. If we have made up half, we ought to make up the other half before we get down. You can do it by keeping steady and pulling like sailors."

Soon the cheering of the boys on the shore sounded

near, but the rowers were silent, while each steersman urged on his rowers to do their utmost. Slowly the Swift gained, and less than two lengths separated them when half the return-course had been passed over. Raymond saw that unless John and James could make the Middy move a little more rapidly they might lose the race:

"Three-quarters of the race done, fellows, and we are yet two lengths ahead, but they are gaining. Do your very best; hold your own and we beat, but be careful that you don't let them gain any more. You can see that they have gained and are coming up to us; don't let them come any closer. We would have beat anyhow had not Tom's boat stopped your rowing, so that you lost two or three strokes and several lengths."

Rapidly the tired boys pushed their boats through the water, each wishing that the last stroke might soon be made, while their comrades on the shore cheered, now for the Middy and then for the Swift, now for Tom and then for Raymond. But the race came to an end, and the tired boys lifted their oars from the water as the two boats shot past the stake, the Middy about a length ahead.

"Hurrah for the Middy!" shouted a number of voices at once. "She is the boat to race with! Hurrah for Raymond and Jim and John! They've beat!"

But with these shouts came others:

"Hurrah for the Swift! If she had not rocked

so at the start, she would have come in ahead. She is the best boat, after all. Good for you, Tom and Nick and Will! Had the course been half as long again, you'd have beat the Middy 'way out of sight."

"Well, I'm glad that there was no longer course to row. That's the hardest work I've done in a year, it seems to me," said James.

"No more racing for me, fellows," sighed John. "If you want to try it, I am willing to sit on the shore and hurrah; but if there are any more races, somebody else must row, I tell you. The fun is all on the other side."

"Well, fellows, now I see why men are so fond of horseracing: they can sit and look on while the horses do it. I want to be a spectator, and not a horse, in the future races," spoke Nick, wiping the perspiration from his face and neck. "But you chaps on the shore had a good time watching us pull and tug and sweat."

"We'd have beat you a great deal more," said John, "if Tom had not come so near running into us and hadn't made us stop rowing."

"But we had to stop rowing too," answered Will, "and we crowded the stake so closely that we could hardly row at all until we had passed it. But Tom said that he had to run inside of your boat."

"You should have taken the right hand, Tom," spoke Raymond, "and it would not have bothered us at all."

"Couldn't do it, Raymond. You see, I was on the outside when we started, and I kept straight ahead, meaning from the first to turn the stake from the outside. When I noticed that you were coming around that way, I saw that if I tried to run outside of you, you would run into us and there would be a bother; so I did what seemed best for both, since I was closer in than you, and hugged the stake close. But it was a fair beat; yet you would not have won had not the boat rocked so much soon after we had got a start. We got a little excited, I think."

"'A little excited'! Yes, Tom, I guess it *was* 'a little excited,'" said Bennie; "but the little was enough to make us think that you fellows meant to upset your boat. I didn't know but you would conclude to jump overboard and push your boat along. That is the poorest way of running a race I ever saw; it might do for a tub-race, but not for one with boats."

"Oh yes, Ben, you think you've got something good to talk about now. Well, talk all you wish; make the most of it," spoke Tom.

For a while the boys sat talking of the race while the tired ones rested.

"I say! let's go in swimming," said Bennie—"that is, if you fellows are rested and cooled off."

"All right," replied Tom, "after we've taken care of the boats—unless some of you want to race. If none of you wish to take a sail again to-day, we'd

better put these boats away.—Nick, you and I can do it."

"Wait," said Nick, "until after the swim. Maybe Raymond will want the Swift to take the Middy back.—How's that, Raymond?"

"No; I can take her back and get out on the dock after fastening her to her stake. I mean to leave the Middy until after I've had a swim," replied Raymond.

The large boat was soon fastened to her buoy by Tom and Nick; then they fastened the Swift to her stake, and, reaching the bank by a platform in the water used for this purpose, they were soon with their companions getting ready for the swim.

In the water the boys had as much sport as they had in the race. When thoroughly tired of this, they came out, and, dressing, amused themselves for a few moments sitting on the shore and talking. Suddenly James shouted,

"There's a snake coming ashore!"

"Where?" "Where?" asked a number of voices at once.

"There, by that little cove. Don't you see his head above water, and his wake as he swims along? He's putting in all the swimming he knows how to do. Let's go for him, boys!"

Hardly were the words spoken than each boy was rushing for the place where the snake was noticed. The creature, seeing them come, turned away from shore and swam out into the river again.

"He's going out again; you've scared him by your noise," said Bennie. "He'll soon come ashore farther up or down; so keep quiet, and we'll have a chance to catch him."

"What's the use bothering with him," asked John. "It's only a little garter-snake, and doesn't harm anybody. Let him alone if he wants to live."

"No, sir; it's a water-snake," replied Bennie, "and one of the kind that catch and eat fish. I believe in killing every one I see. But be quiet, and we'll get this one."

"Oh, I don't care to kill snakes," spoke Raymond. "I hate to be hurting and mangling all the dumb creatures that come across my path. They have a right to live as well as we. Why not let them enjoy that right?"

"For the same reason we might, say, let a murderer live," answered Tom. "The water-snake is a murderer: he kills fish, and ten times more than his useless skin is worth."

"There he is coming ashore," shouted Bennie. "Don't you see him away up yonder? Now be easy. Let him get to the shore, or so close that he will make for the bank rather than for the water again, and there will soon be one snake less to catch fish."

The boys walked quietly along to the place where the snake was swimming for the shore, and before the reptile had gone halfway from the water to the bank he was captured and killed.

"Oh, don't let him suffer like that," spoke Raymond as he watched the movements of the snake's body. "Kill him, and get done with it."

"You can't kill him more dead than he is now, Raymond," replied Bennie. "He is dead, only, as the Irishman said, he has not yet become conscious of it. That is nothing but the muscles of his body working; he doesn't feel it. He is as dead as a snake can be, but it takes a long time for his muscles to realize the fact."

"Oh, it is not that," said John; "you can't kill a snake at once. His head may be dead, but his tail is not; nor will that die until the sun goes down. I have often heard my grandmother say that it takes snakes a long time to die, and that their tails do not die until sunset."

"See here, John! do you believe that?" asked Raymond, laughing.

"Well, watch this one and see for yourself," was the reply.

"I don't believe any such story as that," said Raymond, "but I didn't mean to say that you are telling what is not so," added he. "We who are in the physiology class learned something about that. The muscles of animals, and especially those of reptiles, move long after the animal itself is dead. It is only a muscular twitching."

"Say, fellows!" interrupted James. "I know where there is a yellow-jackets' nest; and if you want some fun, let us go and rout them out."

"What has come over you fellows, that you have suddenly felt a thirst for blood?" asked Raymond. "We may as well let the bees alone and sit here and talk a while before it is time for us to go home."

"I think it would be a good thing to rout out those bees, for they are troublesome, and I heard father say that some day they might cause trouble with the horses. If they should take a notion to go for the horses, they might kill them, or, at least, frighten them badly, besides stinging them almost to death," said James.

"Right, James. If they should happen to kill the horses, there would be danger of their being frightened almost to death afterward."

"Now, Tom, you think you've got hold of something to tease a fellow about; but I said they might frighten almost to death, if they didn't kill. That is what I meant, any way," answered James.

"Well, Jim, we'll let it go without having a fight about it. But I want to ask Raymond a question: If we do thirst for blood, how much do you think we can manage to drink from the veins of the bees?"

"Never mind, Tom; it would take more to satisfy you, I fear, than you will find in one nest, unless you should taste of the blood that the bee carries for his enemies. Then I think one would satisfy you," answered Raymond.

"What makes you think we ought not to disturb the bees?" asked Will.

"Oh, I don't care to be murdering everything that has life," replied Raymond.

"But these yellow-jackets may cause horses to run away," said Will. "I say let's prevent trouble: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

"Maybe we will wish we had the pound of cure before we get through with the job," spoke Tom. "The little fellows may be inclined to fight for home and native land. But I am ready to risk two stings; beyond that I don't care to go."

"I'd rather, if any stings are to be taken, that some other fellows than I get them," said Bennie; "but we must fight and take the risks if we would rid our land of the enemy. Who will follow, comrades? I march against the foe. Let the band strike up, 'See! the conquering heroes come'!"

"Or else let them play the 'Rogue's March,'" responded Tom.

"It will be time enough for that when you start to run with a bee trying to inquire into your record for speed," said Will.

"Bees don't march, Will; they fly," was Tom's answer. "What would be the use of playing a march for them? They have no fancy for music."

"No, but you would be glad if that bee chasing you had a fancy for something else than Tom Wasson's hair or head," replied Will.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESULTS OF BORROWING.

LED by James and Will, the boys soon found the yellow-jackets' nest. Before beginning the attack they stopped near the bees to watch and talk about the best way to fight them.

"Hold on, fellows!" spoke James; "they're quiet now, and we can afford to wait and think what is the best way to go at it, for I tell you it is no easy thing to fight a nest of yellow-jackets."

"Why fight them at all?" urged Raymond. "They are peaceful now; why not let them remain so?"

"Raymond, I think that you signed the temperance pledge some time ago and resolved to do all you could to rid society of strong drink, and of drinking too, I suppose. Well, now, here is a nest of cider-topers. Is it not your duty, as a true friend of total abstinence, to try to destroy every nest of topers?" asked Tom.

"I can give a better reason than that," spoke Bennie. "Yellow-jackets are thieves; they steal

all the fruit they can eat, without ever saying a word about it to the owners."

"The same can be said of half the boys living," replied Raymond. "But I can give a reason why they should be spared. You boys may have noticed the green flies that sometimes cover plants and the young growth of trees: some of the flies, or some kinds of flies, are black. Well, these yellow-jackets often make their nests near the places where those flies are found, and, as I suppose, to destroy them. You know that these flies—or 'aphides,' father said I should call them—injure plants and may destroy them; so anything that kills the aphides is a blessing and should not be killed."

"What do you mean by 'green fly' and 'aphides,' Raymond?" asked James. "Do you mean the plant-lice?"

"Yes; that is what some call them."

"That is what they are too, I tell you," spoke James. "They are the meanest thing, almost, that lives; and if I believed that bees killed them, even these little yellow rascals, I would hold up both hands to save the bees. Father grafted some young cherry trees, and the grafts grew well until the plant-lice began to work at the ends of the young shoots. Then the leaves curled up and the grafts stopped growing, and the next year were dead. Since that I have watched the little scamps, and have seen that half the damage done to young grafts and the tops of young trees are done by those things. But

most of them—that is, those on the cherry trees—are black, while those on apple trees are a kind of gray color."

"Hurrah for Jim! He's becoming a— What do you call it, Raymond? It is some kind of *ologist*," shouted Will.

"Geologist?" suggested Tom.

"No; that is not the one. It is some *mologist*, but I forget the first syllable."

"I know: pomologist. That is something that belongs to fruit," responded Tom.

"See here, Tom! I am not so stupid as you think. I know that 'pomologist' is not the word I'm after," replied Will.

"'Entomologist,'" suggested Raymond—"that is, one who understands the science of insects, or of entomology, I suppose you mean."

"That's the word," replied Will. "I forget such long words, and can remember only one end or the other."

"I guess, Raymond, that you are wrong for once," said Bennie. "I don't know half as much as you about such things, but I do know about those flies and bees, because I have watched them. My uncle told me about the plant-lice, and said that they are called by some 'the ants' cows.' He showed me a great many of them one day on the grape-vines, and told me to watch the small red ants—not the very small ones, but those that are found on the sidewalks and in the sand. Well, I

watched and saw ants after a while climb up the vines and come to these little fellows. When close to them, the ants touched the flies with their long feelers, or horns, and then from two little sprouts on the fly came tiny drops of what looked to me like water; but uncle said it was called 'honeydew.' That the ants drank up."

"How did they drink, Ben? With a spoon or a cup?" asked Tom.

"Watch for yourself, Tom, and tell us some day," answered Bennie.—"Uncle told me that yellow-jackets will sometimes do the same to these plant-lice, and that is the reason why they build their nest so close to them; so I guess that these bees are not as good as they might be."

"How do you know that your uncle was right, Ben?" asked John.

"I watched and saw for myself," was the reply, "though I did not watch very long nor give the yellow-jacket much chance to get his supper, for he seemed mad at something; and when he had milked a cow or two, he flew at me, and we had a bit of a tussle. He did not milk any more that night, and after I left there was no one to take his pail home. It appeared to me that he had forgotten all about such a thing."

"That's one more reason why we should destroy this nest," said Tom. "When bees so far forget science as to fight a peaceable scientific man who is watching to add to the world's store of knowledge,

then it is time that the bees are dealt with. Let's deal, fellows."

"How are you going to begin?" asked John. "That is a big nest, and we had better take care how we begin, or the whole lot will be after us. When they all come, then look out. I say let's burn them."

"No, don't do that; give the poor fellows a chance for their lives—either to fight or to fly away," pleaded Raymond.

"Yes, and to begin another nest somewhere else," answered John. "Then they'll be ready to sting horses in another place."

"Well, we may as well go at it in some way, boys, or it will be sundown, and the bees will be safe for a Sunday attack. You know in war enemies begin their greatest battles on Sunday," spoke Ed Lasher. "I say let's stand off and stone the nest.'

"We need not be in a hurry to attack them," answered Nick. "Wait until all come home, and then we can clear out the nest entirely. They are coming home all the while, you see."

"That's true wisdom," spoke Tom—"to let all the enemy enter the fort first, so as to have the largest possible army against us. It will add to our glory when the victory is won."

"Or make us run the faster if defeated," suggested Bennie. "But if we're going to fight these chaps, we'd better be at it before they make their plans."

"You needn't fear their making plans," said Nick. "They are not the ones to begin a fight; they like their home too well to risk leaving it."

"Well, what do you say to lifting the roof off, that they may question whether or not to stay?" asked Ed.

"Try to lift off that roof, my boy, and you will wish that some one would lift you up and put you in your bed. Don't trifle with a yellow-jacket's home when he is inside, or you will have reason to wish yourself inside your own home. If trifling be not the beginning of a race between a boy and a bee, with the bee getting the advantage, then I am not quite well enough acquainted with yellow-jackets," said Tom.

"Perhaps it would be well to introduce you to these," suggested Nick.—"Come, boys, what do you say to marking off fifteen paces and each taking his shot from that distance at the bees?"

"That's it," replied John and James and Will.

"I believe in giving the poor fellows a fair chance," said Tom, "and say that we shall stand that distance away instead of going up and smashing the nest at once. Don't take advantage even of a bee when you're fighting him."

"Good principle, Tom, when the bee is not around; and I'd like to see you try it when a bee was coming close to your ear to ask you a question, or something," spoke Nick.

"See, here, fellows! you act like a lot of old

grannies, as you stand talking about the bees and don't dare to fire a stone at that nest," spoke James. "Here goes! Look out and run, you fellows who are afraid of bees!"

"Hold on, Jim! Don't throw till we all are ready," said Nick. "Where's a stone? I mean to have my shot with the rest. But I think the fellow who led us to the nest should be the one to have the first shot."

"Give Raymond the first chance," replied James.

"No; I would as lief not throw at all," answered Raymond. "If each throws one stone, there will not be anything left of the nest."

"Then let's stand off twenty-five paces. Here! stand on this line," spoke Will as he paced off the distance and scratched a mark in the dust with his shoe.—"Now, Raymond; you first."

"No, Jim; you take my chance," responded Raymond.

"You are not going back on us?" asked Tom. "Rather, you don't mean to turn your back on the bees, do you?"

"We'll see whose back will be turned first, Tom; we may all be ready to run before many shots are fired.—Go ahead, Jim, and let Will follow; if there be enough nest for me to fire at, I'll take a shot after you all have a chance," said Raymond.

James threw a stone about three feet from the nest.

"Well, that is the first shot, but it didn't go

where I meant it," said he.—"Now, Will, it's yours."

Will threw, and about as far on the other side of the nest.

"I knew I couldn't hit the mark until I got used to it," said he; "but wait till my next shot."

One by one the boys threw, until Tom hit the log against which the nest was built. In a moment the bees were out and buzzing about the nest.

"Now, boys, fire away, for the enemy has come out to battle!" cried Tom.

Tht boys became excited and no longer waited each for his turn, nor did Tom and Will, after the others had thrown, remain at the line. While the other boys were looking up stones they ran close to the nest, that had already been hit and damaged in two or three places; Bennie and Nick followed, and the four were soon hard at work fighting the bees. They had demolished the nest by a few well-aimed shots, and the bees were aiming for them. With hats off and hands moving as those boys had seldom moved them before, the four were working to keep the bees away. The one swarm had divided into four parts, each part selecting a boy, and the real battle began. Tom received the first sting, and he shouted,

"The first blood for the enemy! I am wounded by a spear, and it is poisoned.—Fight, boys, and give no quarter, for they are attacking us with poisoned weapons."

Tom had few more remarks to make, and his three comrades said nothing; but they were very active, until Will cried,

"Let's run."

"Never!" replied Tom, striking away at the bees.

"Run, fellows, run!" shouted Raymond. "They'll sting you to death."

"No; we went into this fight to drive out, not to be driven out," replied Bennie, striking, with his hat in one hand and a piece of board in the other, at the bees.

"See here, fellows! we've got to help them, or they'll be stung to death," called Raymond. "Come on; we may as well settle the matter at once with the bees. They will be furious now to every one who comes by. Running away may save those who run, but will not save others who come along."

Two or three of the boys followed Raymond, but the others kept away, saying that they did not mean to get stung for nothing.

"Put your hat on your head," shouted Raymond to Tom, "and keep them out of your hair!"

"Yes, and give them a nice chance to sting all they want to inside," said Tom, between blows. "No, sir; my hat's my best weapon. If it now holds together until the end of the fight, we'll win."

"Come away, fellows! Run, why don't you?" shouted John. "What's the use of getting stung so? We can come back when they light."

"They will not light to-day," answered Raymond as with a small board he struck down with rapid blows the bees that were about Tom. "If these fellows mean to fight the bees, I will not run away even to escape stings. We may as well finish the battle at once."

"There, Raymond, is one in your hair!" cried Tom, looking from his own struggles for a moment. "Hit him, shall I?"

"Yes, if you can; but don't crack my head harder than you can help."

With a stroke of his hand Tom struck the bee, but the little creature sold his life dearly and stung Tom's hand.

"Goes down with colors flying," said the boy. "But my! how hot was his last shot. It's one of many, though; I believe I'm stung in about seventeen places. And there's another up my trousers' leg! Oh! One has crawled up my sleeve, and is firing away there.—You little scamp! One sting will do for you.—I believe we've got our enemies about surrounded, Raymond, and they are lifting the white flag. Well, I'm ready for a truce, or something. The little fellows fought bravely.—How are you making out?" asked Tom of the others, who, like himself, had about succeeded in killing or rendering helpless the bees that had assailed them.

"I think we've about conquered," replied Nick; "but it has been a dear victory. I'm stung so that

I want to sit down, or something. My hands have both been stung, and here is another sting on my wrist, but none of the bees got into my hair. I was more afraid of head and neck than of any other part of my body. They are dangerous when they sting about the neck and head. But you don't seem to care for them, Tom."

"Oh, I am not much afraid of bee-stings," replied Tom; "they do not hurt me as badly as they do some people. It may be that my skin is too thick for them."

"Well, I am about the same way," said Will. "I don't mind a bee-sting, and fighting bees is fun for me."

"More than for the bees," suggested Tom.

"That is not the way with me," spoke Raymond. "I am afraid of a bee-sting, for it gives me trouble for several days afterward."

"Then I guess you might better have let us fight it out," said Will. "Did any sting you?"

"Yes; one stung my hand, and I think one stung me in the face."

"That's so," responded Tom; "there's the spot right on your cheek. Better put some mud on it right away."

"But there is no mud here."

"The river-water is not far away. Wet some dirt, and put that on; it is as good. That's what I always try," spoke Tom.

The bees were either killed or so badly wounded

that they had given up the fight, and the boys who had been in the thickest of the battle, each having been stung more than once, busied themselves with applying mud to the wounds.

"I don't know how this mud will do for you boys, but I'm afraid that I must try something else," said Raymond, after a few minutes. "I think I will go home and see what can be done, for my wrist is swelling badly, and I think my cheek is too."

The boys soon separated and went to their homes.

The next day Raymond was neither at church nor at Sunday-school, nor was he at school on Monday. He was absent on Tuesday also, but came on Wednesday morning. His face had hardly recovered from the swelling, nor had the stiffness entirely gone from his hand. He told the boys that he had been sick with the bee-stings, and had suffered a great deal of pain, besides the trouble caused by the swelling.

"You would hardly have known me on Sunday morning," said he; "and if any one might have been called cheeky, I was the fellow. My eye was swollen shut, and my cheek bulged out as though it had taken a contract to make me the Fat Boy of the show. I tell you, fellows, if you wish to fight bees in future, I am willing to be umpire, but not to take sides; and if I am caught near a bees' nest again, it will be when I don't know where I am."

"I am sorry, Raymond, that you have had such

a time of it," spoke Tom; "you did it to help us fellows out too. Then you urged us to let the bees alone. Yet you have suffered far more than all of us together. It doesn't pay for a fellow to get hurt in that way when he tries to help others. Never mind; when you get into a scrape, we will help you out, to pay up."

Tom little thought that he and the other boys would so soon be called on to help Raymond out of difficulty. After the battle with the bees none of the boys thought of Mr. Sherman's boat, left by Raymond drawn up on the shore. He, suffering from the pain and the swelling, had little time to think of anything else; but when he reached home Wednesday noon, his father asked,

"Raymond, did any of you boys have Mr. Sherman's boat, the Middy, last Saturday? She is lost, and no one seems to know anything about her. He called around here this morning, just after you had gone to school, to ask if you had seen anything of his boat. He said that you had often borrowed her, and he thought possibly you knew now where she is."

"'The Middy'! Why, is not she at her stake?" asked Raymond, in surprise. "That is where she was put on Saturday. Wait! No, father; I remember: she was left on the shore. Yes, sir, I did have the Middy, and I forgot all about it. Yes, I am to blame. I did not put her back before we went to that bees' nest, and afterward I suffered so

much that I forgot all about it. But is the Middy lost?"

"Yes; so Mr. Sherman said. He went away Saturday, and came back only yesterday. He did not think about the boat until this morning; and when he went to look, she was gone, and he could learn nothing about her except that boys had been seen sailing around with her Saturday afternoon. So you are to blame, Raymond? I am sorry, for I told Mr. Sherman that I hardly thought you had used his boat, as you would not have taken it without permission. Did you ask him?"

"No, father; he had gone away, so we could not ask him. I'll tell you how it was;" and Raymond told his father the whole story. "I am sorry that the boat was not attended to at once when we were done with it, but the rest of the fellows are not to blame. I got the boat, and said I would take it back; they told me to do it before we did anything else, but I waited, and then forgot."

"That is bad business, my son. You should at least take care of borrowed property, though I doubt the wisdom of borrowing in the owner's absence, even when it is from Mr. Sherman. Don't do anything like that again. If the boat is not found, you must pay for it; and you are the one who should find it, now that it is lost, and has been through your carelessness." Saying that, Mr Leigh walked away.

"What am I to do now?" said Raymond to him-

self. "I have got myself into a mess by my carelessness. But I will get out some way. I always get out of trouble by good luck, and will get out of this somehow or other. But I mean to do what is right and honorable. Mr. Sherman has always been kind to me, and I will show that I am not unworthy of his confidence."

At once the boy went to Mr. Sherman's home and told the whole story, taking all the blame upon himself. He told the owner of the boat that he would pay for it if never found, and would pay for all the cost of search.

"That is honorable, Raymond, and just like you," said Mr. Sherman. "I hope that we shall find the Middy, and that you shall have many a good sail in her again. But it would be better not to borrow again until you let me know. Boys are careless—I remember my boyhood—and need to be watched a little when they forget. But I suppose you felt so proud, after beating the other boys, that you forgot all about the boat; so you just drew the Middy up on the shore and let the rising tide take her away. What time was it, and how was the wind at that time?"

"I am not sure about the time, but think it was not far from four o'clock—no, it must have been nearer five—and the tide was nearly down. There was no wind all afternoon."

"Well, that may help us to know which way the boat went when she got adrift. Soon after the tide

began to rise she must have gone off and drifted up with the flood, so she is likely to be found up the river rather than down; and as it was after sundown when she went off, she may have drifted all night, and has gone almost as far as one tide would carry her. Perhaps she drifted back again, and was not picked up until Sunday morning, by some fishermen; in that case we will soon hear from her. But should some vessel have picked her up, we may never see the Middy again."

"I am very sorry, Mr. Sherman—not only because I liked the Middy, but because through my carelessness she has been lost. What was she worth?"

"We will not speak of that now, Raymond; it will be time enough to talk about her value if we are unable to find her. I told John Whitaker that I would want him to go after her—at least, to see what he could learn up and down the river about the boat."

"Well, Mr. Sherman, if you think best I will go along with him to help hunt for the Middy. I mean to pay all the expenses, and want to do all I can to help make good what my carelessness has done."

"I wish I had another man to row down the river and look for the boat there at the same time," replied Mr. Sherman. "I don't want you to go, but wish that you could tell me of some man who would go."

"I will go myself, Mr. Sherman, if I can borrow Mr. Turck's Swift; and I may be able to get Bennie Turck to go with me. I will row twenty miles down and back; she could not have gone farther than that. Do you think so?"

"No; I don't believe that she would drift so far without going ashore. No tide carries as far as that, unless in a freshet; and there was nothing but the ordinary tide Saturday night. I am afraid that some vessel has picked her up; in that case we may never hear from the Middy."

Raymond hurried over to Mr. Turck's, and reached the house before Bennie had gone to school.

"Say, Bennie," said he, "I want help. I've lost Mr. Sherman's boat, and must go to hunt it up."

"What, the Middy! When did you lose her? How did it happen? I thought you were sick Monday and Tuesday," spoke Bennie. "See here, Raymond; you didn't play hooky, did you, because the bees had stung you, and then go sailing?"

"No, Ben; I was honest in what I said this morning about the stings I got on Saturday. I have not been out, except in the yard, from Saturday night until this morning. I have not had Mr. Sherman's boat since Saturday; it was then that she got lost. You know I left her on the shore when we went after the snake and the bees; I forgot all about her until to-day. When I came home for dinner, father

asked if I had had Mr. Sherman's boat, and said it was lost; then first I remembered that I had not fastened it. It was my fault, Ben, and I feel bad enough about it. I must get that boat or pay for it; that's all there is about it. I came over here to see if I may get your father's boat, the Swift, to go down the river and hunt for the Middy. Is your father home?"

"No; he's gone off, and will not be back till night. But you can have the Swift if you want her. How far are you going? You will find it an awful hard row to go down now; it will be against tide, will it not?"

"No; it will be with the tide after a while, though the tide is running up yet, and will keep on for two or three hours. Then I will have down-tide to go down and up-tide to come back."

"'Down-tide to go down and up-tide to come back'!" repeated Bennie. "I guess you don't know what you are talking about, Raymond. You know that the tide wasn't down when we got through sailing and swimming Saturday. It was not low water then until seven o'clock, and here it is Wednesday already, and the tide is more than three hours later; so it is not half high yet, and it will be ten o'clock to-night before the tide turns for rising water. Here it is about a quarter to one, and the tide began to run up about ten o'clock; so it will not be high water until nearly four o'clock. Why, if you go down the river, you

will have tide against you both ways. It will be an awful hard pull. But who is going with you? You are not going alone, are you?"

"I don't know; I don't know whom to get. I wish you would go along, Bennie; I will pay you if you will. It will be a hard row, and I have no longing for such a pull. But I lost that boat, so I must find it: that is all there is about it."

"See here, Raymond! Father is not home, so I can't ask him to let me go with you; but I think he will say it is all right when he comes back, if we are not out too late. I don't mean to let you pay me for helping, but I am willing to go along. Why can't we ask some one of the other fellows? Tom will go, I know: he's always ready for work or fun; and if he goes, we can have fun as well as work. Shall we ask him?"

"I don't want to have any more to go along than are necessary, Bennie; I don't want another to suffer for my wrong-doing."

"But you suffered for our fun," replied Bennie. "You did not want us to go for the bees; and when they were fighting us all they could, and we had more to do than we knew how, then you came in and helped us out, so that you got hurt by it worse than any of us—that is, it cost you more suffering than it did us. Besides, if it had not been for that, you might have remembered to put the boat back, and all this pull down the river had been saved. I think it is right that we should help you out of

trouble, since you helped us out. But say, if Tom is to go, we must get him, or he will be off to school again. He came home for his dinner too, and I guess he has not gone yet. You run and see him while I get the Swift ready."

"Have you had your dinner yet, Ben?"

"Yes; haven't you had yours? Hold on, then. I'll go and see Tom while you eat. Now swallow your dinner and come down to the Swift. I'll have the oars ready, and we'll start right off, so as to get back as early as we can. I will not tell the folks at home anything until I come back."

Raymond ate little for his dinner, and hurried off to the river, where the two boys were waiting for him. The boat was ready, and soon the three were going down the river.

"Better keep along-shore," said Bennie to the others, who were rowing; "the tide is stronger against you in the channel. We must go into the coves a little, but we will make time by it in the end, for the water is almost still near the shore."

"Why didn't you bring the rudder?" asked Tom. "You could have steered and kept the boat straight."

"If you want me to steer, I can do it," was the reply. "The rudder is here, under the platform. I am ready to be captain if you say so.—What do you say, Raymond?"

"Yes, steer, and keep the boat straight and steady," answered Raymond. "We'll make better time."

The rudder was fixed in its place, and Bennie steered as the other two pulled steadily on. Raymond was unusually quiet, and Tom, sympathizing with his friend, said little, nor had Bennie much to say. It was plain that the boys were serious and thinking deeply, while a fixed purpose controlled them. The sad face of Raymond, so unlike his usual expression, showed that the boy was greatly troubled. After rowing two or three miles he said,

"Boys, I will not soon forget this."

"Forget what?" asked Tom.

"You two fellows going along to help me out of this trouble. I don't know how I could have gone alone, yet I would have tried it. It was a piece of stupidity in me to forget to put the Middy to her stake Saturday. I deserve this pull down the river and back against tide, but you fellows did your part in attending to the boats then, and should not be compelled now to go with me."

"Hello! that's news to me," spoke Tom.

"What's news?" asked Raymond.

"That we were compelled to go with you. I thought I was doing it for the fun of the thing, and to help a friend who helped me and fought one of the biggest battles of his life with me. Perhaps you forced Ben to go along, though, on pain of going to school this afternoon if he didn't," said Tom.

"Didn't force me any," replied Bennie; "I was as willing to go along as Raymond was to have me.

I don't feel so anxious to go to school that I am willing to lose a good sail down the river, especially when it is to try to help a fellow who is always ready to help me.—So, Raymond, just you take things easy. If we want to help you, that's our business, not yours—unless you don't want us."

"Don't want you, Bennie? You and Tom have proved that you are my friends. Just as likely as not the rest of the fellows would have done the same, though; I think we have the best lot of boys at our school that I ever saw. But you have done me a favor that I will not forget. I tell you, my heart went down as close to my shoes as it could get when Mr. Sherman told me that the Middy was lost, and that I was the one who had let her go."

"Did he say that?" asked Tom.

"Well, no, not that exactly, but he showed that he meant it. And I knew that it was so. I was the one who took the boat from her stake, and I should have attended to putting her back when Tom and Nick put the other boats back."

"Say, Raymond, you would have done it too had not those bees put you on the ambulance and sent you to the hospital. We fellows who were not so badly wounded should have taken your place and attended to the Middy; but we all forgot it too, or we should not be rowing here this afternoon," said Tom.

"Nor would we have been able to enjoy this sail," suggested Bennie. "I believe that I would as lief

go hunting for boats as for answers in arithmetic this afternoon."

"But you will have to hunt for them the same another day," said Raymond. "And you need not have gone with me."

"That's where you are right, my boy," spoke Tom. "We wouldn't have gone, either, had we not wished to do it. That is exactly where we differ from you. Last Saturday you didn't want to fight the bees, but to help us out of a scrape you risked, and got three days of first-class pain. Now we help you because we in turn want to.—That's about the way it is, Ben, is it not?"

"That's it, Tom. But even if Raymond doesn't want us to go along, I suppose he will have to submit; for, with two to one against him, he may find that he will come out Number Two in a tussle."

"Oh, Ben, you know that I wish you to go along, and I am only too glad that you were willing; but I feel ashamed to think that my forgetfulness and carelessness should be the cause of all this."

"Don't worry, Raymond, until you see us beginning to feel badly. This is fun for us, and I wish it were fun for you. We will find that Middy if she's anywhere to be found; so keep easy. We may as well have the good of this sail; we don't often go off on such a trip as this, and I believe in enjoying it," said Tom.

"I hope we may find her," sighed Raymond, "but we have not seen anything of her yet; and I'm

afraid we shall not see her. If she is lost, I must pay for her, that is certain, and it will take my spending-money for a year."

"Why, how much do you think her worth?" asked Bennie.

"Fifty dollars," replied Raymond.

"'Fifty dollars'! She isn't worth half that," said Bennie, decidedly. "She is an old boat, and was not worth more than fifty when she was new. I don't mean to say anything against her, now that she is gone, but I know. The Swift cost about the same price, or is worth about as much; father built her, and I know that he said he would sell the Swift for forty-five dollars when she was new, two years ago. The Middy was built before I knew how to row. I guess that she is ten years old, and I don't believe Mr. Sherman could have gotten twenty dollars for her. I heard father say that she could not last more than three or four years more."

"Never mind about paying for her, Raymond; it will be time enough to think of that when we can't find the Middy. If you must pay for her, you sha'n't pay all, if I have any money to spare. It will teach us all to help care for borrowed things. I have not as much spending-money as you have, but I am ready to give my share. I guess the other boys—at least, some of them—will help too.—Don't you think so, Ben?" asked Tom.

"I don't know," was Bennie's anwser, "but I guess they'll be willing to do something. I know

that I will help; but I can't ask my father for money: I'll have to earn it myself. He will ask all about it, and say that I should have known better than to have let a boat lie on the shore loose with the tide soon to rise."

"So should I have known better," spoke Raymond. "I did know better, but I didn't do better."

"That's just the way with all of us, Raymond. When we get to be men like Mr. Hendricks, we will be doing just what we know is right; but while we are boys we will be doing wrong, I suppose," said Tom.

"Do you think that Mr. Hendricks always does right?" asked Raymond.

"Why, doesn't he?" inquired Bennie.

"He says that he does not," answered Raymond. "He has told me—and I think he has said it to all of us—that men are as liable to do wrong as boys are."

"Say, Raymond! how far down do you think of going?" asked Tom.

"I don't know," was the answer—"as far as we can. I want to find the Middy if she's down the river."

"But if she has gone up, as she would have done with the rising water and the up tide, what will be the use of looking so far down stream?" asked Bennie.

"She may have gone up a short distance and been

driven down by wind that may have blown that night," answered Raymond. "We don't know where to find her; so I want to make as sure as I can of her not being down the river. But I don't want you boys to go so far unless you are willing."

"I don't care how far we go," replied Bennie, "as long as I am home by bedtime."

"I am willing to go as far as Raymond cares to go, if only I am back by Friday afternoon, after school, to come home with the boys," spoke Tom. "My folks know where I have gone, so will not be worried about me."

"I didn't tell ours where I was going, only that I was going with Raymond to hunt for a boat that had got away," said Bennie. "It will be all right until bedtime, and then, if I am not at home, there may be some questions asked later, when I do get there."

"Well, when you boys say we have gone far enough, we will turn back," answered Raymond.

"It is about time that I took the oars," spoke Bennie, after they had gone half a dozen miles. "Whose shall I take?"

"You take the rudder, Tom, and rest; I am not tired," answered Raymond. "When I am, I will take my place as captain, if you boys say so; but, since I lost that boat by my carelessness, I ought to do the work to pay."

Bennie and Tom changed places, and after a half dozen more miles of rowing Raymond sat at the

Searching for the borrowed Boat. Page 126.

rudder. Nothing was said of turning homeward, and, as Raymond seemed anxious to go as far as possible, the other boys were willing to go. In every cove and bay where a boat could be hidden the boys looked for the stray Middy, but looked in vain. They asked people along the way, but could hear nothing of the object of their search until about five o'clock, when they were not far from twenty miles from home. Then a man said that a boat had been picked up—so he had heard—a day or two before, and was to be found, in all probability, a few miles farther down. He did not know whether or not the boat was the Middy, but thought it probable.

The boys decided at once to go and see this boat, which they were sure must be the lost Middy. The tide was in their favor now, and the place was reached before dark. They found the boat that had been picked up, but it was not the one they were after. Instead, it was a wretched old skiff that would not pay for taking out of the river; it had probably been turned adrift as useless.

"Well, we can't find her here, that is certain," said Raymond, sadly, when they had asked if any other boat had been picked up. "What shall we do? Shall we go back? It is getting dark, and we cannot see in the coves, any way, even if she should be there. We are a long way from home, and it will take till almost midnight to get back."

"That's so," responded Tom. "I don't see what

else we can do but pull back as best we can. It will be a long row, and we are getting tired and hungry too; but we may as well be at it at once. We cannot go any farther to-night."

For a while on the homeward course the boys were quite talkative, but as darkness set in fully and the steady dip of the oars sounded over the waters the voices of the rowers grew more and more quiet, until even Tom was silent. Before they had gone a third of the way homeward a slight breeze of wind that had rippled the water and rolled its small waves against the bow of the boat increased until it became a strong breeze and raised the ripples to large waves. The Swift plunged her bow into the trough and again rose on the top of the wave as she steadily but less speedily pushed her way homeward against the wind. With the change of the tide the waves increased and the wind grew stronger. It required all the strength of the boys to force the little craft along against wind and wave. The dashing of the waters and the spray carried by the wind against the one who sat in the bow rowing had wet first Bennie, and then Tom, and last Raymond, as each took his turn at the forward oars, until each boy was wet to the skin. At first this wetting seemed to restore the drooping spirits of the three, but even that grew tedious.

Midnight passed, and yet the boat was far from home, while the wind was growing stronger and the waves higher. The boat was kept as closely

to the shore as possible, to escape the large waves and to be able to take advantage of the protection of points of land; but when these points must be passed, then came the harder pull at the oars and the worse pitching of the boat and the dashing of the water. Unwilling to stop, the three tired rowers kept on as with blistered hands, wet bodies and drooping spirits they longed for home. To add to their difficulty, the sky, that had been clear, grew cloudy and the way became dark; so that it required the closest watching of the one at the rudder to keep from running against a rock or some projecting headland.

When their spirits seemed almost entirely gone, Bennie, who sat at the rudder, shouted,

"Hurrah, boys! there's a light! That means home. That's our house, I know. Yes, sir, we're not far away from home now. The folks are up watching for us, I believe. That light comes from our home on the hill, and the light is in the sitting-room. Keep courage; we'll soon be home now. It isn't more than a mile, if we were only on the other side of the river."

"But that means nearly two miles, for the river is wide here, you know," spoke Raymond. "And how shall we cross in such a wind? I don't believe I was ever in such a storm on the river. I know that I never was at night."

"I don't believe you ever were at this time of night, Raymond," said Tom. "I hope none of us

may ever be out again in such weather. But no matter; if we get safely home this time, we will take care not to go the next time. We will fasten the boat first and tell the owner to look for his own boat after that."

"But how shall we cross in such a storm, Tom?" asked Raymond. "It's all well enough to creep against the wind along-shore, but what can we do out in the channel, where the waves are so much higher and the wind has full sweep? I tell you, it is not safe to try.—What do you say, Bennie? You know more about the water than either of us does. Had we not better stay on this side until morning? What if some sloop or schooner should come down on us as we are crossing? They could not see us, nor hear if we called. I don't think it is safe to try. I am willing, if you boys are, to stay on this side until morning."

"I guess we can cross," replied Bennie. "It is the hardest wind I was ever in on the river at night, but the Swift is good for a storm, and I think we can cross. I am willing to try. But I tell you, fellows, you don't catch me in another fix like this; I'd rather work two weeks than try another such trip."

"Or go to school two days," suggested Tom.—"But, Raymond, we are wet through and through, and to sit here in our boat or on the shore would be to catch our death of cold. We can't find any one up at this time of night, and would be obliged to

stay out of doors or sleep in a barn; then we might have an invitation from some dog to stop with him. I say let's try to cross.—Ben, is it safe, do you think?"

"I guess so, but we'll have a hard time to do it. If we head pretty well up against the wind, I think we can cross safely, and we'll be all the more glad when we get there. I will row on the front seat, and you, Raymond, steer, for you must be more tired than I am. I don't want to stay here with that light from our window shining and saying, 'Come here and make us feel sure that you are safe.' I don't think we ought to let the folks at home be worried more than we have to."

"I am willing to do just what you boys say," replied Raymond; "if you think it safe, I'm willing to risk it. But I think, Bennie, that you should steer; you know more about it than we do."

"I say so too, Ben. I mean to keep hold of the oars now until we reach home," spoke Tom. "The faster you can steer, the better."

"I'm willing to steer if you boys say so, and I think it will be best to strike across now and directly for home. We will then head so much against the waves that the boat will not roll badly."

The Swift plunged into the greater waves of the channel, and sometimes almost buried her bow under them, but rose just in time to prevent anything but spray coming over the top. Bennie kept his eyes fixed on the light and held the rudder-tiller with a firm hand, while the other boys put forth

all the strength they had to pull for home, now so near. It was the hardest struggle of the long night of toiling, but it came to an end at last.

"Hurrah, boys! We are almost home now," shouted Bennie, cheerily. "I see the edge of the channel, where there is smoother water. Here it is. Now the worst is over. We are in smooth water. Hurrah for home at last!" said he as he steered the boat alongside of a small pier. "Here we are, safe and sound, but hungry and wet; blistered and sore, but home. Now, boys, get out, and I will fasten the Swift to her stake, and then for home, supper and bed."

"What time do you suppose it is?" asked Tom.

"I guess it is after midnight," replied Raymond.

"It is nearer morning than midnight," spoke Bennie. "The up night-boats went by almost three hours ago, if I can guess time, and they would be behind with such a wind against them. I believe it is nearly four o'clock."

The boys hurried home after the boat was fastened, and found that Bennie was right: it was four o'clock in the morning. The three were tired, wet, hungry, but thankful that they had reached home in safety. Nor were their parents less thankful to see the boys. Though Bennie had not told fully where he was going, his mother had learned from Mrs. Wasson, whom Tom had told, and there was no alarm until the hour became late; then all were anxious for the return of the boys. But Mr. Turck,

who had great faith in his son's boatmanship, quieted their fears, and said that the wind had no doubt delayed the return of the boys, but they would come back safely; if not that night, they would make their appearance in the morning.

But the Middy had not been found. John Whitaker came back with no news of the lost boat, nor could any one else about Metona tell anything about the missing craft. Mr. Sherman advertised for her in two or three papers, offering a liberal reward for the return of his boat, and about a week after its disappearance he received notice that the Middy had been picked up by a sailing-vessel on Sunday morning after the boys had left it on the shore. The schooner by which the boat had been found had been on a trip down the river, and had taken the Middy along. On the return the advertisement was seen and the boat returned to the owner. Raymond paid the bill for advertising and the reward for the recovery of the boat, the whole amounting to ten dollars. Tom, Bennie and several others of the boys paid their share, while a few declined, saying that, since Raymond, who got the boat, neglected to put it back when he could have done so, he should bear all the blame and pay all the expense.

CHAPTER V.

GIVING.

"MISTHER RAYMOND, there's a poor boy at the door who says he hain't had anything to ate since day afoore yisterday. Yees mither has gone out, and what shall I do? If she was here, she'd till me to give him all he'd ate; but she bees away. Now, what shall I do?" So asked Margaret, the hired woman in the home of Raymond Leigh.

"Why, give him something to eat, Margaret, of course," replied Raymond. "I know that neither mother nor father would have a poor person go from the door hungry. But if you are afraid to do it, I will be responsible."

"Would ye moind comin' down to the kitchen yersilf and say him, Misther Raymond? He looks loike a skiliton; his clothes be all torn and dirty, and he sames almost starved."

Raymond went to the kitchen and saw there a lad whose appearance was rather against him. Ragged, dirty and pale, the poor fellow did look like a skeleton, and seemed like some one who had been almost starved. His wistful eyes were turned

toward some cold food on the kitchen-table, but the boy remained standing in the doorway, where he had probably stood when Margaret went up stairs to call Raymond. As soon as the lad saw Raymond he bowed in a scared kind of way and spoke:

"'Ternoon, sir."

"Good-afternoon," replied Raymond. "Come in and sit down, will you? Margaret says that you have had nothing to eat since day before yesterday; how is that? Where have you been that you could get nothing to eat? You look as though you had been starved for a longer time than that."

The boy came in and took the first seat he came to, and seemed watching the door with one eye, while the other was following the movements of Margaret and Raymond. He acted as if frightened and ready to spring up and run at the first sign of danger.

"I hain't had much ter eat, captain, fer a long time; that's a fact," was the reply. "But fer the last two days I've just been travelin', and hain't had no time ter eat, but got tired of that, and had ter stop somewhar. I hain't got no money, ner nothin'; but if yer'll let me work it out, I'd be much obleeged ter yer fer a bite of somethin'. I'm 'most starved; that's so."

"Yes," said Raymond, "of course you may eat, and all you wish. Then you can tell your story.—Margaret, set the table and give him as much as he can eat."

"Much obleeged ter yer, captain, but mebbe yer hain't seed me eat when I's as hungry as a big pick'rel? I'll only eat as much as yer thinks best, though," replied the boy.

"Just eat all you need," responded Raymond. "People never go hungry from this house if they deserve food; and I think you are not a bad boy, so eat all you wish."

While Margaret prepared the food, Raymond, thinking it better to leave the hungry lad to eat unmolested by questions, went up to his room, but came back as the boy was finishing a dish of cold pudding.

"That's new eatin' ter me," spoke the lad to Raymond. "Never had none of that whar I come from."

"Where do you come from?" asked Raymond.

"Wish yer could ask some question what is easy ter answer," was the reply. "There's some questions what is hard; that's one."

"Don't you know where you came from?" inquired Raymond.

"Well, I know somethin' 'bout it, but that ain't the hard part. It's the answerin' what's hard," replied the boy.

"How did you come to travel so long without eating?" asked Raymond.

"No time ter stop," answered the boy; "was in a hurry, and 'tended ter business first. Now I've had a tiptop dinner—the best I've ever had; I want

ter go ter work and pay fer it if yer'll let me. Hain't got no work 'round that yer want done, hain't yer? I kin cut wood, and all that. Feel jist like it now, I tell yer. I ain't no beggar ner tramp; I want ter work fer what I get."

"I don't know that there is any work just now that you can do, but I would like to know more about you," spoke Raymond, his interest in the boy increasing the more he looked at him. "What is your name. You have one, I suppose?"

"I've got a name; don't mind tellin' that ter yer. But 'scuse me fer not tellin' whar I comed from. They call me 'Jerry.' Er most of 'em calls me 'Jere.' Some calls me 'Jere Thompson.' I guess that's about the size of my name."

"Well, Jerry, where are you going? If you have been traveling since day before yesterday, I should think you were tired out and would like to rest."

"Am tired, and don't want ter go no further. Want ter get a good place ter work where I kin arn my livin' and have no fellers cussin' me all the time; that's what I'm arter. Hain't got nothin' fer me ter do, have yer? I want ter pay fer that tiptop dinner. My! It's the best I ever had. Don't live like that allers, do yer? That ain't what I'm used ter."

"You need not trouble yourself to pay for your dinner, Jerry; you are welcome to that. I know of no work that you can do here; but if you stay

to-night, father, when he comes home, may be able to tell of some place where you can get work. Yet if you don't tell where you are from and what you are, few people will be ready to hire you. They may be afraid that you cannot be trusted."

"They needn't be. I don't cheat ner steal. Don't mean to say but what I did, but I don't do any of that now. I guess I've learned better. I'm willin' ter tell whar I come from when I get a good place and kin stay."

"Have you no other clothes than those you wear?" asked Raymond.

"They's all I've got, captain," was the answer.

"Don't call me 'captain,'" responded Raymond.

"Got ter call yer somethin'," spoke the boy, "'cause I don't want ter holler out 'Say,' like what I useter do. Don't know what else ter call yer."

"My name is 'Raymond Leigh,' and you may call me 'Raymond,' or 'Mr. Leigh,' or 'Mr. Raymond,' as Margaret does. My father is 'Mr. Leigh' here."

"Well, then, if yer say so, I'll call yer 'Mr. Raymond.' I ain't much used ter them kind of handles, though. Useter call folks 'captain' and 'boss,' and the like of that; but we didn't often say 'Mister.' It's right, though, and I want ter do like what other people do."

"What have you been used to do? Who are you, any way?"

"I'm a ragged feller what's had one of the best

dinners he ever seen, and has found one of the best gentlemen what lives."

"Would you like a better suit of clothes than those?"

"Does a duck like water er a fish like bait? Of course they do. So I'd like a chance ter work for a good suit of clothes. If I had 'em, do yer think I'd be runnin' round in these rags? They's the best I've got, though, and they've been good friends ter me," said Jerry, patting the ragged garments as though they were old tried friends. "If they be dirty, I hain't had no chance to wash 'em. I mended 'em some, but don't do that good. It ain't like a fisherman ter mend much, 'less it be nets."

"So you were a fisherman?" spoke Raymond.

"I kin tell that much, but yer mustn't ask too many questions, 'cause I might have ter say lots of nothin'."

"Why is it that you are so unwilling to answer such questions?" asked Raymond.

"Hunted rabbits don't like ter leave no tracks," was the reply.

"Have you no home?"

"None but these ragged clothes and a place in a barn where I slept last night."

"Did you never have a home?"

"I did once, but it went back on me."

"How was that?"

"When I turned my back on it and left."

"So you will not tell where you live?"

"'Scuse me if I don't. I don't want ter say what makes me seem 'sif I didn't feel much obleeged ter yer fer the dinner and fer lettin' me stay here. Did yer say I must stay till ter-morrow?"

"Yes," answered Raymond, smiling; "you may stay. I think we can find a place for you to sleep. —Can we not, Margaret?"

"Indade, sur, I don't know what the missis will say; but if she says he may, I can foind a bed for a civil lad loike him," said Margaret, who had listened in silence, but with sympathy, to the replies of the stranger.

"Much obleeged ter yer," spoke Jerry to Margaret. "Mebbe yer would like me ter carry in some wood er fetch water er cut kindlin's? I kin work—was brung up ter do that. Allers worked; had ter do it."

After talking a while longer Raymond went to his room and left Jerry in the kitchen to help Margaret. He told her, after Raymond had left, that she might rest and he would carry in the wood and do up chores, bring water and do all the other work to be done.

"Can yees milik?" asked Margaret.

"I guess I kin," answered Jerry; "useter do that many a time. But I wouldn't do it no more; then things went hard with me. But that's what I can't tell yet. 'Tain't 'cause I don't like ter do it, but 'cause I didn't want ter milk cows what wasn't

b'longin' ter them what wanted me ter milk 'em. 'Twould be stealin'; that I don't b'lieve is right, do yer?"

"It will not be staleing to milik the cow here," was Margaret's answer. "But who tried to make yees stale?"

"'Scuse me; that'd be tellin'," answered the boy, in a low voice.

Raymond studied for a while, but could hardly keep Jerry out of his mind. Those rags, that pale face, that interesting look on the boy's countenance, and the strange way of trying to hide his home made Raymond all the more anxious to learn about the young traveler. When it became too dark for him to study, he went down to the kitchen, and found Jerry coming in with an armful of wood he had cut. He had, as Margaret said, cut up enough wood for kindling fires for a whole week, had brought in all the water she needed and had milked the cow.

"Jerry," spoke Raymond, "how would you like to have a good suit of clothes? Those will be cold when winter comes, and they will not last many years more."

"How would I like it? Look at that and that," said he, pointing to holes in his garments. "It ain't so bad now, when 'tis warm yet; but when it gets cold, then poor Jere may be dead Jere if he hain't got nothin' more ter cover him than what these be."

"Well, if you wished clothes, why did not you

ask for them?" replied Raymond, determined to see how the boy would answer. "You asked for food when hungry."

"'Ask,' Mr. Raymond? I couldn't ask like what this suit has been askin' with its big open mouths all over. It's been askin' all the time. I was so 'shamed ter go 'long the road with these holes! And I was cold last night in these places where the holes is. I just cried one time 'cause I didn't know what I'd do when this got ter be all holes, and nothin' else. I don't cry much, but did then. I jist wished I was dead, er somethin'. It's hard ter be 'lone and have no one care fer yer—no brother, ner nothin'. That's me. I hain't got nothin' in the world that I knows of what cares fer me. All I've got is this coat and trousers, shoes and hat, and what I wears under. Them's as bad as these is."

"Come up stairs," said Raymond.

Jerry followed, and soon was trying on a suit of Raymond's that he had outgrown.

"They go on easy," said the boy.

"How will they do for you?" asked Raymond. "Too large, I fear. Yes, they are much too large. I am sorry. I have outgrown them, and you could have them as well as not."

"Me have them?" asked Jerry, his face all aglow. "Do you mean it?"

"Of course I do. Do you think I would try to deceive you?"

"Well, I don't know, but fellers has tried them tricks on me, and I didn't know but you mighter. But these'll do first rate if I can have them. My! They beat anything I ever had. They be as good as what gentlemen wear. They ain't much too big; I'll grow, mebbe, and fill 'em up. If I turn up the trousers and the coat-sleeves, they'll be all right. I'm ever so much obleeged ter yer. If yer'll only let me stay a spell and work fer 'em, I'll be so glad that I won't know which end is up, head er feet."

"But those will not do to wear around among people," spoke Raymond, thoughtfully. "I don't know what to do. I wish father and mother were home, but they will not be back till late. I'm half a mind to— I believe I will try. I have money of my own, and since I did not have to pay very much for the Middy, when I was afraid I'd be obliged to pay thirty or forty dollars, I will have enough to do it and some over from what I have on hand. Then my next month's allowance will soon be due. Yes, I can afford it. No matter if I can't; I have the money, and he needs the suit. That's all I need ask. I know father will say it's all right."

In silence Jerry looked on as Raymond talked to himself. It was not certain to the boy what was meant, nor did he know what to answer if an answer were needed.

"Say, Jerry, it's dark now, and we'll go out to the store. They have suits there that'll fit you much better than this."

"This one will do, Mr. Raymond, and I hain't got no money ter pay fer any more. It will take me lots of time ter work fer these. I kin make these do well enough; I kin sew a little. Learned how from—"

Here Jerry checked himself and was silent.

"Oh, you may keep those too," replied Raymond; "but come and get what fit you better. Take those off and put your old ones on first, though."

Jerry meekly obeyed, hardly knowing whether to object or to express thanks. Raymond took away the suit and hung it up as he told the boy to follow him. Jerry determined to obey and say nothing. The two entered the Metona store, which contained what a general country store of years ago had for sale. Among a variety of articles were a few suits of clothes, ready made and not of best material, nor yet of nicest appearance. One of these suits for boys was selected—the best there was—and tried on by Jerry.

"How will that suit do?" asked Raymond.

"'Do'! Why, it fits just like the skin of an eel ter his back; it seems as if 'twas made fer me. But won't it cost a big lot of money, Mr. Raymond?" whispered the boy, when the clerk had turned away. "I want ter pay by workin', but don't want ter run too much in debt."

"We'll see about that if the clothes fit you," replied Raymond. "If you like those, we will take

them. But you need not take them off," he continued, as Jerry began changing the garments.

"What! Wear these now, right away? Ain't they too nice? They be jist the thing fer Sunday."

"Yes; wear them now. That old suit is too ragged to wear out in the street."

In his new suit Jerry turned himself this way and that before the glass, admiring his appearance and grinning to himself as he said half aloud,

"My! That's a fine-lookin' lot of clothes fer a boy. Makes him look like a gentleman. Don't know hisself. I ain't no gentleman, though—that is, I ain't one of them put-on fellers, if I *have* got nice clothes."

Raymond paid for the suit, and said,

"Now, Jerry, we will go."

"Makes a feller feel big ter have sich things on," spoke the boy. "Mr. Raymond, yer doin' more good 'n what yer thinks. I've been so 'shamed that I didn't want ter meet folks on the road; that's how I comed ter go close 'long the river-bank. I ain't 'shamed now ter see the captain of the biggest steamboat what ever run up the river."

"Did not you find it bad walking along the bank?" asked Raymond, thinking to learn by a roundabout way of questioning where the boy was from and who he was.

"Purty bad, but there's roads some of the way, you know, right along the bank. Snakes, too, part of the way, but I ain't 'fraid of them 'less they be

copperheads. They's mean and sneakin'; 'slief as not bite a feller."

"How far did you travel each day?" asked Raymond, in a seemingly careless way.

"Can't tell; didn't measure. Good ways, I guess."

"What made you come up the river instead of going down?"

"Got started that way, and jist kept on."

"Where did you start from?"

"See here, Mr. Raymond: I can't tell all yer want ter know; so guess it won't do ter tell much till I know more 'bout things. I want ter tell yer all; mebbe I'll tell all soon, so please don't ask too much now. Yer as good as can be ter let me work fer these clothes—that is, if yer'll let me do it; and I want ter."

"We'll see about that to-morrow, Jerry. But I wish you would tell me more about yourself, for I don't want to ask so many questions about things you don't wish to tell. Yet you see how it is. I mean to have you stay with us to-night, and my father will be displeased if I keep somebody whom I know nothing about. I may believe you to be as honest as can be, but how can I tell him about what you are if I know nothing? You see, for his sake, I should know. How do I know but that you are a runaway or worse—a boy who comes to get into a house at night to steal?"

"That's so, Mr. Raymond," replied Jerry, after

a moment's thought. "But then s'pose I do tell? How'll yer know that I ain't lyin' ter yer? Folks what steals knows how ter lie, I tell yer now. If I do tell, won't yer tell nobody till I say so?"

"That's a promise I can hardly make until I know more about you," was the answer. "But this I will say; I will keep still unless you are guilty of doing wrong that should be told at once. Will that do?"

"I'll tell yer, Mr. Raymond, what I'll do: I'll tell yer some, and the rest 'nother time. How'll that do?"

"I suppose it must," was the reply.

"Well, then, I did run away, but not 'cause I'se a rascal, ner nothin'. I hain't got no father ner mother, ner nothin'. Folks says I never had none. That ain't so: every boy's had both some time er 'nother. Don't know nothing 'bout mine. Two old hunkers— No; I won't call 'em that. Two old chaps what fishes had me. I don't know where they got me, ner nothin'. I lived with 'em so long as I kin 'member. But they's cussin' an' kickin' me all the time; so I jist run off day afore yesterday, and kept runnin' till I was tired. When 'twas dark, I hid in a haybar'k * till mornin'. Soon's 'twas light I scooted off close 'long the river, and kept on. Didn't dare run 'way from water, fer I knowed how, when folks gets lost in a fog and things, they jist runs 'round to the place they

* Hay-barrack.

started from; so I wouldn't get lost and run back ter the old shanty. That's how I come ter run along the river. You see, them old chaps lived in a fish-shanty 'way—ever so far away, I guess—and got their livin' by fishin' and shootin'; and the rest of the time they got drunk. That's the time I had ter take it, I tell you."

"Take what?" asked Raymond.

"Kickin' and cussin'; them old chaps could do lots of that even when they's too drunk ter stand. It only made their tongues and feet looser until they went ter sleep; then I'd have a good time. Was my own boss then fer a while, I tell you. Then I'd eat all I wanted ter."

"Wouldn't they allow you enough to eat?"

"They didn't have nothin' ter 'low. They'd jist go on a spree, use up all their money and let me starve if I wanted ter. I did 'most starve first; but when I learned how ter catch and cook fish, I had it better. But what did the old fellers care fer me when they's drunk?"

"Did you travel all day and only stop at night?"

"Yes, all the time 'cept when I rested. I'd get tired and had ter stop, but soon put at it ag'in, 'cause, yer see, was 'fraid ter get catched. I thought mebbe them old chaps would send after me. That's why I wouldn't ask fer nothin'; meant ter run on till I got so fur that nobody could take me back ner hear 'bout them old fellers. But I gin out this arter-noon; I had ter stop, 'cause I was starvin'. My!

I didn't think folks would be so good ter a young chap as they hadn't seen 'fore 't all. Here I comed ter yer house, and yer hain't seen me never before, yet yer guv me a tiptop dinner, mean ter let me stay all night, and, what's lots more, have guv me a first-rate suit of clothes fer me ter work fer. Now, if yer would only hire a chap like me, I'd be as happy as a king."

"What do you know about kings?"

"Don't know nothin' 'cept what folks tell and what I read in a book."

"Can you read?"

"A little; I want ter learn more. I read that kings is happy, and has lots of money and big folks ter wait on 'em, and all that, and that they be so proud that they won't speak ter common folks. I wouldn't be that way, though."

"I doubt if kings are always happy or proud, either," suggested Raymond.

"I wondered if they be happy too when I seed that picture of one with a big heavy sharp-pointed thing on his head. Guess if I had ter wear one of them all the while I'd say, 'No, thank 'ee; don't want ter be king.' A hat's bad enough ter wear when yer got ter put it on, 'thout wearin' crowns; that's what the book said that thing on the king's head was. But them crowns won't keep no rain off ner cold out, ner keep the sun from shinin' hot onto a feller's head. They've got holes in the top; so what's they good fer, any way?"

"They show that the wearer is a king," replied Raymond, laughing.

"Well, what's the use of lettin' folks know in that way fer, if they can't find out from 'em what they is? Mebbe, though, it's like old Mr. Smith, who had ter put a board on the head of his old cow ter keep her from jumpin' fences. Mr. Bruden had ter put brass knobs on his oxen's horns because they'd hook. Then Boss Perkins had rings in his pigs' noses ter keep 'em from rootin', but that wasn't ter tell what they was so much as ter keep them from doing what's bad. That hain't what kings have ter wear crowns fer, is it? They ain't unruly, be they, that they have ter wear them things?"

"No," replied Raymond, laughing; "kings are not unruly more than other people, I suppose, though many of them are rather bad."

"Well, I didn't think folks made them wear crowns 'cause they was so bad; 'cause how could they be happy then?"

"Crowns are not heavy, nor do people make the kings wear them. They are only worn before people."

"That's like Mr. Bruden, who took the yoke off his oxen so soon as he turned 'em out inter pasture, I s'pose."

"Not exactly like that, but— Yes, that will do. Oxen have the yoke removed when the work is done, and kings may lay aside their crowns when their work is ended."

When the two reached Mr. Leigh's home, Jerry stopped, as Raymond was about going in at the front door, and said,

"'Scuse me, Mr. Raymond, but I think I ought ter go 'round ter the kitchen; I ain't one of the up-stairs kind yet. Some day I am goin' ter be, though, if I live long enough. I'll go 'round ter the kitchen and sit there."

"Very well," was the reply. "I will be down soon, and we can talk more about where you are to go to sleep and what you are to do to-morrow. I am afraid that father and mother will not be home until long after bedtime."

Jerry and Margaret were getting on quite finely when Raymond came down stairs later. Every little while the boy rubbed his hands gently and proudly over his new suit, and then looked down at the bundle of garments lying by his side, as if to sympathize with his old friends in their humiliation, while proud that he had what were to his mind so much better clothes.

Margaret had questioned him as to his home and why he had come away. Jerry's answers were at first like those he gave to Raymond in reply to his first questions, but, becoming sure that he could trust the kind-hearted Irish girl, the boy was more free to answer than he had been to tell Raymond. She had told him that Mr. Leigh, like his son, was kind-hearted and would not send any poor boy back to be abused by cruel masters; so Jerry was ready to

continue his story in the hearing of both Raymond and Margaret.

"And don't yees know who was your father nor mither?" asked the girl.

"No," replied Jerry. "First I know I lived in that old shanty with Pete and Jack Meter. I asked 'em how I comed there, but they'd never tell. They said they got me outen* a fish—that I wasn't one of the kind what has folks ter be brothers, ner nothin'. That ain't so. How could I live in a fish? What's the use ter tell a lie even fer fun? I don't no more. I useter, but Miss Kiefer—that's one of the nicest gals what ever went in a boat—said I mustn't; so I stopped. It was hard ter stop all ter onct, but I soon lost headway when I stopped pullin'."

"Who was Miss Kiefer?" asked Raymond.

"She was a purty woman what comed where I was ter get well in summer and paint pictures. Oh what purty pictures she painted! but they warn't so purty as she was. Well, she telled me it warn't right ter lie ner cheat ner swear, ner anything like that. She was good, I tell yer. She never swored; I know that. I don't b'lieve she ever got mad, neither. She read the Bible. She told me ter do it; and when I said I didn't know how, she said she'd show me, and she did. She learnt me ter read and write too. She comed two or three summers. She went away some weeks ago; then I wanted ter

* Out of.

go too. She said she warn't comin' back; she said she was goin' to a better country. When she told about that place, oh how her eyes shined! I guess she wanted ter go. She said it is the place where God lives; she called it heaven. But she went away, and so I knew that all my friends had gone; so I wanted ter go."

"Was that the reason for your leaving the fishermen?" asked Raymond.

"That was some of the reason. But them old hunkers— No; she said I mustn't call 'em that, and I won't, neither; but they got wuss and wuss. She guv them money ter get me a new suit of clothes, and they jist drunk it up and kicked and cussed me, and didn't give me nothin' to cook with, but said that I must go and buy on tick ter the store. But them store-folks said they wouldn't let me have nothin' more; so I couldn't get nothin'. Then they cussed me 'cause I didn't have nothin' ter eat when they got over a spree and got hungry. I had ter catch fish fer myself and cook 'em without lard; couldn't buy none, yer know. I had some salt, though. Well, I set some of their fikes and got a big mess of fish, and sold them while they were havin' their spree out; but I hadn't used the money yet when they got over it. Then they found that I had the money—somebody told them, I guess—and they hit me and made me guv up the money; and then they went onter another spree right off. They took time, though, ter hit me and

kick me sore before they got so drunk that they had ter stop. Then I jist said 'twas no use ter stay there and get starved ter death and killed by kickin', and have them knock me stiff with oars in the bargain; so airly day 'fore yesterday, when they both was snorin' like as if they was racing ter see which could beat, I jist crawled down the ladder of the shanty as slyly as I could and ate up all the cold fish I had left, and cut fer the woods."

"Have you had nothing to eat since you left the shanty?" asked Raymond. "Were there no apples on the trees that you could eat?"

"Ain't many apple trees growin' in the woods now. I kept 'long the bank whar there's woods, so's ter let no one see me. Yer see, them old fellers said, when I told 'em I would run away if they kept hittin' and cussin', that if I did folks would catch me and bring me back. They said I b'longed ter them and hadn't no right ter run away. Do you think any one will want ter take me back ag'in?" asked Jerry, with an anxious look into Raymond's face.

"Not unless you have broken the laws. If, as you say, the men abused you, no one has a right to compel you to go back. My father is a lawyer, and he will know all about such things, and will see that no one harms you," spoke Raymond, with deep interest; for the longer he talked with the boy, the more was he convinced that Jerry was honest and needed friends.

"Yer father a lawyer?" repeated Jerry, in alarm. "Then I must go! Here! Let me put on my old things ag'in and go 'fore he comes home. He will send me back, sure. That's what Pete told me; he said that if ever a lawyer got hold of me he'd use me up so that I'd be skinned like an eel. No, Mr. Raymond; you've been good ter me, but I must go on ter night."

"Wait, Jerry, and see my father, and you will learn for yourself that he will be, as I am, your friend. Don't go to-night out into the dark, but wait until morning, if you must go," urged Raymond, as he saw that the boy was in earnest about leaving.

"But yer father will send me ter jail if he don't send me back ter the old shanty. Folks all told me that lawyers is hard cases—that they is as bad ter other folks as pick'rel is ter other fish. I wish I hadn't come here. Kin I go? Yer kin have these clothes. I don't want nothin' if yer'll let me off. I'd be glad ter work fer that dinner, though, but can't stay now."

Both Raymond and Margaret were amused at the boy's manner, and for a few moments seemed to enjoy his anxiety; but soon the two tried to persuade Jerry to stay, and finally succeeded in convincing him that lawyers were friends of honest people rather than their enemies. After a while Jerry quieted down and began talking again as before his alarm. Raymond, to turn his thoughts

from his fears, asked about Miss Kiefer. This set Jerry's tongue going again as he said,

"I don't know who she was, more'n what I told yer, only she was jist the best woman that ever was. And wa'n't she purty? I guess she war! I never seed nobody half so nice as she war. But she said she wasn't good; she said that the bad was all inside, and there was lots of it. Mebbe she said what is so, only none on it comed out. She said God saw it, if I didn't, but that he had blotted it out fer 'cause of what his Son had done. I didn't ask how it could be there if 'twas all blotted out; I guess she'd a told me how it was if I'd asked, but I asked so many questions that I got 'shamed ter ask more. She wanted ter go out sailin'; so she asked Pete and Jack ter let me row the boat and let her go 'long. She paid them, so they let me go, and I was glad ter do it, she was so good ter me. She told me lots of things that I must do and what I mustn't, and I've tried ter do as she said. She said it was bad ter cuss. When I asked her what made Pete and Jack cuss me, she said they warn't there ter answer fer theirselves, and I mustn't do wrong if others did. Then she told me all about God and how he liked folks, and what he did fer 'em, and how he sent his Son ter die fer 'em. That was a queer story, but she said it war true; and I b'lieve it. She never told but one lie, and that was when she said she warn't purty. Mebbe she didn't know she was tellin' it, though; she couldn't see her

own face like what others could. Mebbe it didn't shine so bright and her eyes didn't glisten so when she looked in her lookin'-glass. When she talked ter me 'bout what Jesus done fer folks, it seemed 'sif she knowed it all and war tellin' what she'd seen herself. When she told me that he died fer me too, I didn't b'lieve it first, but she said it was so; then I b'lieved it. But it is queer that he'd a cared fer sich a chap like me 'way off up in heaven whar he lived. He must like folks; don't yer think so?"

This question, directed to Raymond, who, with Margaret, was listening to every word, startled him. Though what the world calls a good boy, he was not a Christian, nor did he care much for Christianity. A Sabbath-school scholar and quite regular at church, he showed all outward respect for religion, but to him it had little interest. He went to church and Sabbath-school because others did, and because it was considered the right thing to do; but he perhaps never thought of religion as something in which he should have a personal interest. His father was a lawyer, and, though a man of excellent character and generally beloved by all, he was a man of the world. Mrs. Leigh was a professing Christian, but did little more than profess. She seemed to have retired from an active profession; while she retained the sign, she gave up the service of Christ. It is not strange that the son, the only child, should regard religion as a matter of very little

importance and not worth his thought. He knew that his mother was a professing Christian, that she went to the communion-table, and that his father did not; and that was about all the difference he noticed between their lives, as far as Christianity was concerned.

"Well, what do *you* think of it?" asked Raymond, after a moment of silence following Jerry's question.

"I think he must have liked folks more'n what they likes theirselves, if he'd come 'way down here and die fer 'em. Do yer think much of him fer what he did?" eagerly asked Jerry.

"I can hardly answer that question," responded Raymond, in a low tone.

"What! Don't yer know that?" asked the boy. "Don't know if yer like him er not, even though he died fer yer too?"

"Yes, I suppose that I like him," was the answer, in a low voice. "But I should think that you would not have left that place, when you had such a good friend there."

"She didn't stay; she went off 'fore I comed away. She only stayed there in summer-time, any way. The last time she went off she said she wouldn't come back no more, 'cause she's goin' off ter be where Jesus lives. She coughed awful, and folks said she had consumption and was goin' home ter die. She didn't say nothin' 'bout dyin', 'less she meant it when she said she was goin' whar Je-

sus lived. I didn't like ter ask that. She told me ter go ter Sunday-school again so soon as I got them new clothes what she guv money fer."

"Did you go to Sunday-school?" asked Raymond, interrupting.

"Yes; she got me ter go the first summer she comed. She took me in her class and teached me the letters and my *a b, abs.* I could read words of four letters when she went away the first time. I forgot some, but she made me come back ag'in the next summer ; and when she went 'way in the fall, I could read them Sunday-school books. But I had ter hide 'em, er when Pete and Jack got drunk they'd make things lively in the shanty if they seed me readin'. They'd as lief as not heave a book inter the water er poke it inter the stove, but they didn't get no chance."

"Didn't you go to Sunday-school when she went away?" inquired Raymond.

"No; them clothes warn't fit," replied Jerry, pointing to the bundle of clothing, "and the boys poked fun at me. They said the fish had eaten holes in my clothes, and next they'd eat me up. I didn't like that, so stayed away. I would have waxed them, but she said I mustn't fight, so I jist didn't. But 'twas hard ter stop. I useter fight, but since Miss Kiefer said it was wrong I don't. She said it only hurts two 'stead of one, and that I'd better take a little sass now and then and say nothin'. She didn't call it 'sass,' though; she said

if I jist wouldn't say nothin' it would be easier than if I hit back. The other feller would feel better, so would I, and we'd both be better friends than if we had a fight over it. But she was only a woman, and didn't know how hard it is ter take 'sass' and say nothin' when yer feel that the other feller ought ter have a lickin'. It don't allers save trouble, 'cause the other feller gets bossy and thinks he kin do what he's got a mind ter. If yer wax him and let him see that yer kin do it, he'll be ten times as quiet as when yer say nothin' all the while. I told her so, and she jist laughed, but said I mustn't think that I'd got ter fix all things right in this world, 'cause I'd have too much ter do. The best thing fer me was ter keep out of trouble even if I had ter run ter do it. When I asked her if I must allers run even when the other feller could beat me runnin', she laughed ag'in and said sometimes it might be best ter stand fer my rights, but I mustn't be doin' it all the while. I must never fight 'less I had ter; then I must do the best I could. She didn't say 'twas allers bad ter fight, ner that I musn't never do it, but mustn't do it if I could run away. So yer see that she knowed somethin' too. But I don't have ter get out of scrapes that way half so often as what I thought. She told me ter ask God ter help me keep out of trouble and ter do right. I do that, and I guess it does help, but I try myself, and don't let God have all of it ter do. She said I mustn't ask him ter do what I kin 'thout, and ought ter do

myself. But say, Mr. Raymond: if yer father is sich a good man, though he is a lawyer, do yer think he will help me get a place ter work 'round here? How I'd like ter work right here! Hain't yer got a farm whar I kin do the work, 'tendin' ter hosses, cows and things? I know 'bout hosses, and I kin milk. I had ter 'tend ter hosses—that is, Pete had one old hoss that he made me 'tend ter until he up and died. He didn't guv him 'nough oats ner nothin'. I useter pick grass fer him and feed him what I could get. Didn't like ter see the poor old hoss suffer. He couldn't help that Pete and Jack got drunk and had no money ter buy oats and hay."

"We have no farm," replied Raymond, "though we have a few acres of ground, and we keep a horse and cow; but I attend to them, and the ground father hires men to work for him."

"Now, if he'd only let me do the work, I'd be glad. I want ter be whar folks don't cuss ner kick a feller. I kin work, and I am willin' too. Then, if I don't work it out, how be yer goin' ter get pay fer these here clothes? I hain't got no money."

"We will wait until father comes home," answered Raymond; "then we will see what can be done. He may get you a place to work near here. But you need not trouble yourself about those clothes; I do not expect to be paid back. I had some money of my own, and used it; that's all there is about it.—But, Margaret, it is supper-time. I

must study after supper, and will go to my room as soon as I have eaten."

After tea Jerry and Margaret had a long talk in the kitchen, and the girl, already interested in the young stranger, became his warm friend. Mr. and Mrs. Leigh returned before bedtime, but were too tired to see Raymond's charge until the next morning.

CHAPTER VI.

A HELPING HAND.

WHEN his parents came home, Raymond told what he had done, and added,

"I could not turn him away hungry. I knew that mother would not allow even a tramp to go hungry from our door.—And I knew, father, that you would have told me to get some clothes to cover the boy with. I wanted you both to see and hear him talk. He is the queerest boy I ever saw. He can sit and talk by the hour, and it is amusing to hear what he says. He uses strange expressions, but has such an honest way about him that I was drawn to him in spite of myself. I think he is what he pretends to be, and not a tramp."

"I hope that he is an honest lad, my son, but be careful whom you admit to your home to stay overnight. I know nothing about this boy, and take for granted that you have been wise; but be on your guard against frauds in the form of honest-appearing persons who go about the country with pitiful stories. The fact that they are used to telling them makes the stories appear all the better. Really honest people who are unfortunate are not ready to tell their whole story, nor able to tell it very glibly."

"Why, father, he would not tell his until I coaxed and quizzed him, and then he told only part until assured that I would not take him back to his old masters. I am not sure that he is honest, but had you heard some of his talk, especially when he spoke of God and the Saviour, I think you would have been ready to believe him honest."

"That is the way many a fraud does. He tries religion and pretends to be pious that he may under its cloak hide his evil designs. I do not mean to condemn your boy, but am speaking of travelers who go about seeking home, friends and food, and who tell a pitiful story of their sufferings and losses. They are usually frauds, too lazy to work, who gain their living by their wits, while honest people are taxed to support them."

"Well, I don't believe that this boy is lazy. He asks to work, and wants by working to earn the clothes I gave him. He tried to earn his dinner after he had it by helping Margaret. He took her work, she said, and did it as well as she could do it. He seems to know how to milk, and says he can take care of horses; and I judge that he is able to manage a boat, since he has lived with fishermen. I am sure that you will be interested in him, father, when you see him."

"We shall see about that in the morning, I presume," replied Mr. Leigh.

"You may tell Margaret to let him sleep in the room off from her own," said Mrs. Leigh. "That

opens into the hall, through which he cannot pass to go out without going by our door; so that I suppose we can trust him."

"You need not be afraid of him, mother; I am sure that he is honest. But Margaret asked me if she should fix up that room for him to-night, and I said she might unless you came home before bedtime; so I think she has it all ready."

"Well, you or she may see your boy to bed when he wishes to go. I am too tired to do anything more than go to bed myself," said Mrs. Leigh. "In the morning we can talk more about him."

Raymond went to the kitchen and told Jerry that, as it was bedtime, he would show him the way to his room. The boy followed, and as soon as Raymond said, "Here is the room, Jerry; I hope you will sleep well," Jerry replied,

"Must I sleep in sich a room? Never slept in so grand a place, that I knows on. My! 'Tis good 'nough fer a king; I mean good 'nough fer gentlemen. No matter; some day I mean ter be one."

"What? a king?" asked Raymond.

"Well, no; not a king what wears them crowns, but somebody who is somebody. Miss Kiefer said a boy kin be what he wants ter if he tries hard 'nough. I'm goin' ter try."

"I think you had better sleep first," spoke Raymond. "You will feel more like trying to-morrow morning than now. I think you are tired and sleepy after your long tramp."

"I've had time ter rest since I comed here; but if I don't sleep ter-night, 'twon't be the fault of that bed. My! Ain't them covers nice and white! Too clean fer sich a dirty chap like me ter get inside 'em. Wish I could have taken a swim 'fore I went ter bed."

"It is too cold now to swim in the river, but here is water if you wish to wash."

"That's jist what I do want. I hain't fit ter sleep in sich a place."

"What kind of a bed did you have in the shanty?"

"'Twas an old tick full of straw, but the straw was so short that mice couldn't chaw it shorter; so they guv it up. Then I had a couple of old blankets in cold weather, and a pillow stuffed with straw —that is, it useter be stuffed with straw, but the straw leaked out through the holes. Mice made 'em. Had ter have 'em ter get in and out, yer know. Yer see, the mice used the things when we didn't want 'em. That was better 'n if the mice had used 'em when we wanted ter. Mice had their shindys then, and kept us 'wake. I s'pose they thought we kept them 'wake in daytime, so they kept at it in the night. I ain't 'fraid of mice, but don't want none in the piller when my head's outside of it."

"I don't care to have mice around in my room, either," said Raymond, turning to leave.

"Say, Mr. Raymond, what kin I do airly?

I want ter be up and do what chores there be around."

"You just sleep in the morning and get rested. I usually do the work in the morning. I milk, and curry off the horse and feed him. I will do that."

"And let me sleep? I guess that would be payin' fer them clothes yer guv me!"

"Well, go to sleep now, and I'll call you in the morning to help me. If I were to let you go alone to do the work, you might curry off the cow and give slops to the horse and wash the faces of the pigs."

"Guess I know the difference 'tween cows and hosses," replied Jerry; "but mebbe the pigs' faces would be cleaner if they was washed. But I want ter help pay fer all yer have done ter me. Yer won't hear the last of it fer some time now, I tell yer, if yer only guv me the chance."

"Then I shall be obliged to run off and lock the door behind me," said Raymond, half laughing.

"Oh, I don't mean ter bother yer, but yer can't help a feller thinkin' all he wants ter about it, and keepin' his heart full of 'Thank ee's' fer what yer done. Miss Kiefer said that a boy ought ter be thankful fer all what good folks does ter him. I'm tryin' ter be that; don't have ter try hard, though. She said I'd find lots of good people ready ter help me if I did what is right and asked God ter help me through. I guess it's so. Mebbe he sent me here ter find some of the best ones, ter start on. She

said he'd see that I got a helpin' hand when I wanted it most. That was ter-day. I got it; that's a fact."

"Well, I'm glad you found it," spoke Raymond; "so, while you are thankful, I will say 'Good-night' and go to bed."

Jerry responded with a hearty "Good-night," and, the door closing, he was alone.

"Yes," said the boy to himself; "it was God who sent me ter a place where they'd guv me a helpin' hand, and here I am. Had I gone ter them other houses, 'slike as not I'd got kicked out, if they hadn't jist catched me and sent me back. I guess I'd ought ter be thankful. Here I've had a first-rate dinner and supper and got a first-rate suit of clothes—mebbe two on 'em—and one of the best places a feller could ask fer ter sleep in. My! Wouldn't I be good, though, if I could stay here and work fer them! 'Good'! I guess you'd see a feller what behaved hisself and did what he's told 'thout any kickin' ter stir him up. But even if I stay, this room won't do fer me; it's company's room. No matter; I'd sleep in a cellar if they'd only let me stay and work, and treat a feller half-way decent, and git sich dinners and suppers as I've had. Say! If I want ter stay and work here, why can't I ask God ter let me? Miss Kiefer said I must do that. I did ask him ter help me git away from the shanty, and here I be; now I'm jist goin' ter ask fer more. Mebbe God sent me here ter work; so what's the harm of askin' ter get at it? If 'tain't

best, he'll send me where it'll be better: that's what Miss Kiefer said. I don't b'lieve he's goin' ter let me go back ter the old shanty, er he wouldn't have let me stop here. I b'lieve I mean ter pray ter stay here; nobody will know about it if I don't stay. And 'tain't nobody's business but mine. But how'm I goin' ter say the things what I want?"

For a few minutes Jerry sat on a chair thinking what to say; then, kneeling down, he began:

"O God, this is a good place fer a boy. I am ever so much thankful that I come here. I didn't know but thou sended me here. Now I thank thee, 'cause I wouldn't have found sich a place alone if I had tried, mebbe, ever so long. But I'm here, and I thank thee fer letting me come. Now, if I stay, mebbe I kin be good here and do what I ought ter. Please let me stay. Help them ter see that I kin work and want ter do right. Mebbe there's lots of good people 'round here ter teach me ter be better. I ain't good, but I want ter be. Don't let me swar ner lie ner cheat ner fight ner be bad here. Make me better 'n better till I'm as good as Miss Kiefer said I must be ter go ter heaven. Fergive my sins and make me want ter do jist right allers. I ask all this fer Jesus' sake. Amen."

After remaining quiet for a few moments Jerry arose and began to look around more closely, and to talk to himself about what he saw. His life had been spent so much alone that he had gained the habit of talking to himself a great deal:

"Now I've asked him—and there ain't no harm in that—mebbe God'll let me stay here er get me 'nother place as good; don't want no better. But 'tain't 'cause this is sich a nice place that I want ter stay. They don't cuss here—that is, I hain't hearn none do it. Then mebbe I kin be good here. I want ter be better 'n I be. Miss Kiefer told me so much that I jist want ter do like what she said. Then I can't help havin' a hankerin' ter see her. She said she is goin' ter heaven, and I kin go too some day if I be good and love Jesus and make him my Saviour. I want ter see her, and I want ter go there too. Then what I heard them other folks say in Sunday-school has made me think too. I guess it's so what they said. I ain't so good as what a feller ought ter be; that's a fact. But ain't this a nice carpet? And the chairs and that air washstand are jist as purty as can be. Now, if I was ter have sich a room, what would I do with sich a burer? That's what Miss Kiefer called them big things with drawers in. I hain't got no clothes ter put in sich things, but then 'twould be jist the thing ter stow string and little pieces of rope and sich in. My! Wouldn't I like ter have a place ter keep things when I get 'em, and say, 'That's all mine'? I guess I would. But there's a pitcher of water, and soap too, and towels and things. My! Jist what I want. I have been travelin' so long that I ought ter take a swim 'fore goin' ter bed 'tween sich bed-clothes. I wonder what them old fellers said when

they woke up and found Jerry warn't there? Guess they wanted ter see him some. Well, they didn't. If he'd been 'round, he'd had some more sore places on him, I'll bet. Arm and leg and back hain't got over them things yet. They might have hit with somethin' else than a oar. But they ain't goin' ter hit me soon ag'in; that's one good thing. They'll have ter cook fer theirselves now, er get 'nother boy. I pity him if they do. Mebbe they won't hit and cuss him like I had ter take it. Cusses don't leave no marks outside, but they hit inside the skin and hurt worse'n what kickin' does. Cussin' is like a knife all blade and no handle: it goes in deep. And then I guess it's like Miss Kiefer said: it hurts the feller worst what uses the bad words. I'm glad that I guv it up. If I kin stay here, I won't never say bad words ag'in. But I guess it's time I go ter bed; so I'll jist git ready. My! I feel so good that my tongue has got loose and wants ter keep goin' even when I'm 'lone."

After washing, the boy went to bed, and was soon in a sound sleep. He did not awake the next morniug until Raymond called at his door, saying that breakfast was ready.

"Sun's up, sure as can be," said Jerry to himself. "Well, if I hain't slept, then I'd like ter know what yer call sleepin'? That bed beats anything I ever see fer sleepin' in. I was as easy as if I was sailin' right 'fore the wind with sail up and didn't have ter do nothin' but go ahead."

After breakfast Mr. Leigh had Raymond bring Jerry into the library. The young stranger for a few moments could hardly answer the questions put to him, but by degrees Jerry found power over his tongue, and used it.

"I don't mind tellin' yer all 'bout myself, captain," replied Jerry, "but I'm 'fraid yer'll send me back. I ain't no bad feller. I jist comed this way ter take care of myself, and keep from bein' bothered and from botherin' folks what don't like chaps like me."

"But if you do not tell anything about yourself, how can I know that you are not a runaway who should be sent back?" asked Mr. Leigh. "I know very little about you except what I see. Raymond has told me a little, but said that I would learn from you your story; and here you seem unwilling to tell it. How am I to decide what you are? How can I know that you are not a thief, or even a worse character who should be arrested and sent to prison?"

"Don't do that, captain," appealed the boy. "I ain't no thief; don't steal no more. I runned away ter keep from doin' bad things, but I'm 'fraid if I tell, you won't say it was right ter come. Then mebbe yer'll tell others and I can't git no work nowhars. Now, if yer'll let me work here ter pay fer my lodgin's and things, yer'll have a chance ter see what I am."

"Yes, and perhaps give you a chance to steal or do what is even worse," replied Mr. Leigh.

"Captain, if I was a thief, would I have comed with sich ragged clothes? If I didn't want no work, would I be askin' yer ter let me work fer yer? Thieves don't run 'round askin' fer work ter pay fer what they gits; they jist takes it 'thout askin'. I ain't no thief. If yer jist try me fer a week yer'll see that I kin work, and hard too."

"What can you do?" asked Mr. Leigh.

"Will yer hire me?" eagerly inquired the boy. "If yer will, I'll tell yer all 'bout myself."

"I wish first to know whom I am hiring and what he can do," was the answer.

"Well, captain, I kin do 'most everything what other boys kin."

"Don't call father 'captain,' but 'Mr. Leigh,'" spoke Raymond, quietly.

"'Scuse me, Mr. Leigh; I forgot. I'se useter call them what's boss 'captain.' It's the best name I knowed of. But I kin take care of horses, and kin milk cows; I kin row boats and fish, and do lots more. If yer'll only hire me, I'll do anything yer ask me; but don't send me back ter the old shanty."

This last appeal was made so earnestly that Mr. Leigh said,

"I will not send you back anywhere unless you have been guilty of some great crime, and I don't believe you have. But before I hire you I must know more about you. I wish to know what you can do not only, but who you are."

"Will yer hire me if I tell yer all?" spoke Jerry, eagerly.

"Yes," was the reply, "if you can show that you are a boy whom I can trust, and who will do what I ask of him."

"Well, then, I'll tell yer," said Jerry, suddenly appearing cheerful and happy. "But I forgot ter tell that I kin cook and wash dishes, sweep and clean up 'round the house, and I kin work in the garden too. I kin bake cakes, fry fish, bile taters, fry ham and eggs, and all them things. I kin make good chowder."

"No matter about what you can do now," interrupted Mr. Leigh, "but tell me who you are and where you have lived."

"I'se comin' ter that, capt— 'Scuse me: Mr. Leigh. I forgit sometimes. I'm jist like a fike half full of fish. It won't let 'em out quick ter oncst; but when they begins ter come out, then they'll come all in a heap. I don't know jist how ter begin ner what ter say, but I lived with Pete and Jack Meter. They live in a fish-shanty down the river. I useter take care of the shanty and do their cookin' and help 'em with their nets, and do what they wanted me ter. I useter fish with them too. I don't know how long I lived with them; I lived there 'bout as long as I kin 'member."

When Jerry had told the story as it has already been given to the reader, he stopped, and Mr. Leigh asked,

"What is your full name?"

"'Jerry.' That's what they calls me, only when they's drunk, then they said, 'Jere, you rascal!' and then put some hard words on after that."

"Have you no other name—no surname?" asked Mr. Leigh.

"The boys useter call me 'Jeremiah, fat in the fire,' but I don't like that; 'tain't no name fer a feller." Then, as if calling to mind the meaning of Mr. Leigh, Jerry added, "The tail-end of my name is 'Thompson;' so they calls me 'Jere Thompson.' And some, when they feels all right ter me, says 'Jerry Thompson.' I guess that's about what my name is. Them old fellers didn't often call me nothin'; they jist hollered, 'Here, you!' er 'You devil you, what yer doin'?'"

"Don't you know how those men came to get you? Were you given to them? Were you a relative of theirs, or what?" asked Mr. Leigh.

"Don't know how they got me; they ain't no 'lation of mine, that I knows on. I didn't call 'em 'uncle,' ner nothin'. I don't know nothin' how I comed ter be with them; never hearn tell. Guess I had a father and mother, like other boys, but they up and died 'fore I knowed anything; so somehow them old chaps got me from somebody. That's what I guess; nobody told me nothin'."

"How did they treat you?" asked Mr. Leigh.

"'Treat me'? They warn't the kind ter treat me; they wanted ter drink it all theirselves. They

kept a jug full all the time when it didn't get empty right arter, and that's what it did. I had ter go git it filled then when they wanted more."

"Were they kind to you, or did they abuse you?" was asked again.

"They kind? Well, if yer call cussin' and kickin' and hittin' a feller kind, then they was kind; but I don't call it that way."

"Did they give you enough to eat?"

"Not when they was drunk. They didn't want ter eat theirselves and I guess they thought I didn't. But I got hungry; and if there warn't nothin', I had ter catch it."

"Catch what?" asked Raymond, who had been a quiet listener.

"Catch what I wanted ter eat. I had ter go bobbin' fer eels nights, sometimes, 'fore I could get my breakfast, dinner and supper. Took 'em all ter oncst then. Didn't have ter do that often, 'cause I looked out. They didn't know—'cause they was sleepin' and snorin' loud 'nough ter scare the fish—but folks sometimes guv me somethin' ter eat when I worked fer 'em. I'd go out ter work now and then, 'cause them old fellers said I might as well as ter lie round loose and do nothin'. Then they'd take the change and have a good time on it."

"Can you read?" asked Mr. Leigh.

"Some; Miss Kiefer learned me." Then Jerry told of Miss Kiefer and how she taught him to read at the Sunday-school where she took him, and

of her kindness to him. "She was the bestest woman what ever was," added he, with emphasis. "She wanted ter learn me 'bout other things too."

"What things?" inquired Mr. Leigh.

"She learned me ter read the Testament; then she guv me one, and said I must read it every day and I would become a good boy and go clean up ter heaven when I died. When I told her I didn't want ter go ter heaven, but jist ter go where folks liked sich chaps like me, she said that is jist what they did ter heaven. Then she told me all 'bout heaven and said it war jist the place fer boys, and that I'd have a place all ter myself if I wanted it. She made me almost want ter die, 'cause she said so much 'bout heaven bein' so good a place fer folks. I guess I ain't good 'nough yet ter get there, but then I don't mean ter die yet fer a spell if I kin help it. But that Miss Kiefer told me lots more. I don't know much 'bout lots of things, 'cept what she told me. Other folks didn't care 'bout me, I guess. Some on 'em didn't know nothin' 'bout me, though. I jist stayed in the shanty and went fishin' fer them men, and done what they said, only when I worked out by spells."

"How did you come to leave the shanty?" asked Mr. Leigh. "Did Miss Kiefer tell you to do it?"

"No, she didn't; but I told her I meant ter. Then she said I mustn't until I'd asked God ter show me what ter do. But, yer see, I knowed what ter do, and said ter my own self, 'What's

the use ter ask him ter show me, when I know now?' I asked her that oncst, and she said that I might think I knowed, but didn't. She said I'd find it warn't so easy ter run away and get work, and all that. She said I must be patient and ask God ter help me. Well, I did ask him a good deal when she went away and said she warn't comin' back no more. Then I jist thought, 'Here she's gone, and won't come back; why'm I ter stay and be kicked longer? What's the use ter ask God ter help me, when he's guv me good legs ter run with?' So I jist runned away, and that's how I comed ter go."

"Why did those men abuse you?" asked Mr. Leigh.

"Don't know, 'cept that they wanted ter. But they wasn't allers kickin' me; they was real good sometimes, when they wasn't drunk. 'Twas 'cause they got drunk so much that I had ter take it. I don't know what folks wants ter drink rum and things fer, 'cause it's bad, and makes 'em bad. It useter seem ter scoop all there was of a man outen old Jack, and Pete too, and scoop 'em both full of cats and dogs. They didn't guv me none ter drink, and I'm glad on it. I seen how it made them, and yer won't catch me drinkin' it."

Mr. Leigh became deeply interested in the boy, and listened quietly to his whole story as Jerry told it, and then made a bargain by which, for wages and board, the young stranger was to serve him.

"But I want ter pay fer them clothes what Mr. Raymond guv me," said Jerry.

"That you and he may settle between you," responded Mr. Leigh; "I will pay you wages, and it will be your business to see about your clothes. If you choose to repay Raymond, and he wishes it, I have nothing to say."

It was finally agreed, at Jerry's earnest request, that Raymond should accept the money the new clothes had cost, but that the old suit would be given him.

The two boys soon became warm friends, and Raymond had an easy time, so far as work at home was concerned. He never needed to ask Jerry twice to do a thing; anything that would please Raymond the boy gladly did, and seemed to keep his kindness in constant remembrance.

The other boys of Metona learned to like Jerry; and when they saw Raymond treat him almost as an equal, they too were kind to him. Once or twice they tried to play tricks on him, but after a few trials gave it up. Jerry was their equal in shrewdness, and more than a match for them when playing tricks was concerned.

"What's the use ter be a pokin' fun at a feller?" said Jerry to Raymond one day after the boys had tried to tease him. "That's jist the way boys useter do at the old shanty. Them city chaps with their nice clothes thought I didn't 'mount ter nothin', and that they could jist do what they'd a mind ter.

They'd fling stones inter the water ter spatter me wet; then they'd shove off the boat when I'd left it on shore, and I'd have ter chase it, while they stood on the bank laughin' and hollerin' at me. They'd put big sticks 'gainst the shanty door when I'se in, ter lock me in. Sometimes they tried ter set dogs onter me, but that wouldn't work, 'cause, yer see, I'd get them dogs ter come right by me and lay down. I knowed all the dogs 'round there 'cept what they brung from the city, and them dogs didn't know nothin'. I jist set some dogs what I knowed ter fightin' their dogs, and then I had the fun."

"Did you ever play tricks on those boys?" asked Raymond.

"Yes, I did now and then, when I had a good chance; but, yer see, I was all alone and had ter look out fer myself. One time two on 'em stood on the dock lookin' on the water; they was jist the fellers what had spattered me all wet one day. They was dressed nice and as slick as a fish. Then I thought my time had come; so I jist creeped up 'hind them and guv them one shove, and 'way they went inter the water. Then I jist stood on the dock and hollered like they did ter me, only I said,

> 'Fishermen flounder, jist come rounder,
> And I'll pull you out by the tip of yer snout.'

When they swum ashore, they didn't say nothin', but jist went and got on dry clothes, and stayed

away from the dock arter that. I guess the water washed the mad outen them. Mebbe they seen that it warn't nice ter be wet, so let me 'lone. When I told Miss Kiefer, she said it was bad ter do that, and that God said I must let him 'tend to sich things. When I asked her how long I'd have ter wait, she said that it would be better ter wait allers than ter drown folks ter get even with them. If they'd drownded, I'd have ter suffer fer it, and mebbe be hanged till I died; that scart me. But 'fore I throwed 'em in the water I knowed them two fellers could swim. But when Miss Kiefer told me how bad I'd been, I was sorry, and said I wouldn't push no more folks in the water. Miss Kiefer asked me how'd I like ter have folks knock me over and drown me, or somethin', right off jist so soon as I did somethin' wrong, and guv me no chance ter try ter do better. She said that God uses folks jist 'sif they's bad boys of his'n what he wants ter see better; so he guvs 'em time and lots of chances ter start right. She said that he didn't like ter see us pitchin' in and hurtin' them, 'cause they be all his'n. He wants 'em all ter be good and have a good time, so waits ter guv them a long chance and lots of help."

"Well, did the boys let you alone?" asked Raymond.

"They didn't all, but she talked ter some, and *they* did. Them others I had ter take care on as best I could. I did want her ter go 'way onct, so I

could guv 'em a wollopin'; that's the only time I wished she warn't there."

In the early winter—as Jerry came to Metona in the autumn—he and Raymond had an experience they did not soon forget. Mr. Leigh's house stood a short distance from the river, but was hidden on either side by hills that shut off the river-view except for a short distance in front. The cold weather came suddenly, and in a day or two the river was full of strong ice. Powerful tug-boats forced their way through the ice, pulling behind them loaded barges. Now and then the ice proved so strong that the boats were caught and forced to back out and try some other place, where the ice was not so thick. When an open space between the floating cakes was seen, the boat would turn for that, even though out of its direct course, preferring a roundabout way through clear water to a short one that must be cut through heavy cakes of ice.

One Saturday, as Raymond was sitting in the house and Jerry at work outside, they noticed a tug-boat towing several loaded barges. The light westerly wind had driven the ice away from the west shore of the river, leaving a clear space there. For this the tug had steered, and when the boys looked was rapidly forcing her barges along to get them to their destination before the ice, by change of wind, could crowd back toward the shore. In front of Mr. Leigh's place was a wide flat, or space of shallow water—too shallow for loaded vessels.

The tug ran too close to the shore, and one of the barges—the most heavily loaded of all—ran aground and broke loose from the tug. The tide was going out, and to get the barge off would need more power than the tug had, nor was it considered safe to wait a minute with the other barges; so the tug steamed on with the rest of her tow, leaving the grounded barge fast on the flat.

The barge had no boat, and after a while the captain called to a young man who happened to be on the bank, asking to be taken ashore. This man soon brought the captain to land, and then let him take his boat to go down the river to the town of Navina, to get another tug to pull off his vessel at high water. The barge ran aground about ten o'clock—two hours after the tide had changed; so it would be about two o'clock before low water, and eight or after in the evening before the water was high again. The captain could easily reach Navina, if no ice hindered, within two or three hours, and a tug-boat could be back long before night, though it was not probable that the barge could be pulled off before six or seven in the evening.

The west wind died away before long, except a slight breath of it that served to keep the ice from crowding upon the stranded barge. Slowly the afternoon passed, and no tug appeared; nor did the captain return. The boys watched the vessel with some interest to see when a steamer came to pull it off, but had no further anxiety about it.

They supposed that other men—or, at least, one—were on board to take care of the barge; they saw women and children moving about, but had no idea that they had been left alone there. Toward evening the sky, that had been slowly growing hazy during the day, gave decided signs of a snow-storm; before dark the first flakes came lazily down to earth. The tide was rising and no boat had appeared to take the barge away. Jerry kept watching the solitary light that shone from the mast of the vessel, expecting every minute, now that the tide was reaching the same height as when the barge ran aground, to see the light of a tug coming to take away the stranded vessel.

"Say, Mr. Raymond!" said he, with excitement, as he came in after a careful look from the bank; "I b'lieve that barge's adrift. She ain't where she was. The light is shinin' dim, but then the snow is comin' down faster, and I b'lieve the barge is loose. No tug is comin' ter get her; and if she gets off 'mong them ice-cakes, she'll be a goner 'fore mornin'. She'll run aground somewhere, and then the cakes of ice'll jist shut in on her and cut her ter pieces. I don't see why they don't let go their anchor; it'll be safer on the flats here than anywhere else."

Just then the two heard female voices crying to some one. The boys hurried out to the bank.

"Mister! Mister! Mister!" shouted first one voice, then another, from the barge.

"Them's women!" broke out Jerry. "I don't b'lieve there's a man there. Women wouldn't holler so if there's men on board. Holler back, Mr. Raymond."

"What do you want?" shouted Raymond.

"When will the tide be high?" came back the question. "We're drifting, and have no anchor. There's no tug coming, and I don't know what we shall do. We'll drift into the ice if we keep on."

"We'll come out and see what we can do," shouted Raymond. Then he spoke to Jerry: "We'll go after them. We must take a big boat. There's Mr. Williams's large boat; that is just the thing. It is awfully heavy, but can stand the ice, and will carry a load too."

"How kin we get that off?" asked Jerry. "It's 'way up on the shore, and turned over. You and I can't lift it. I wish yer father was home; he'd help. Then we'd do it."

"Well, he will not be home for an hour yet, and by that time the barge may be drifted out of sight. Besides, we may be unable to reach her on account of the ice. But what we do we must do in a hurry, I tell you. Say! run after Tom Wasson; he's just the one to help. You get him, and I'll have the oars down and be all ready to turn the boat over; and we'll go."

There was no need of telling Jerry to hurry. Raymond hastened back into the house and told his mother in a few words what he intended doing.

She at once got some warm wraps to put about the children who had been seen on the vessel.

"Keep bright lights in the front windows," spoke Raymond as he caught up the wraps. "The snow is coming down swiftly, and the barge is drifting away from shore. If she gets far away, she will be too far off to see the shore in the darkness and storm. I don't know when we will be back. There is little danger."

Hurrying away, Raymond reached the boat, and had oars ready when Jerry and Tom appeared.

"Some fun ahead, Raymond?" spoke Tom as he sat down the lantern that he had brought.

"It will be a serious kind of fun," was the answer, "but I think we can bring them ashore all right. We must be moving quickly, though, for I think the barge is drifting away toward the east side and will soon be among the ice. If she gets there before we do, then look out for a time in which there will be no fun."

"There is no wind," answered Tom, "and she is only drifting with the tide, but not going as fast as the tide; for what wind there is comes from the north, and that keeps her back. But here goes!" and three boys had hold of the large boat, and soon by hard work had turned her over and were slowly pushing her into the water.

"Here, Jerry! you hold the lantern and stand up in the stern to see how we are to go. I wish we had a rudder, but I couldn't find it," said Raymond.

"Tell us if we are heading for the light on the barge."

"Then I've got ter keep this here lantern down, 'cause I can't see with it up. But say, Mr. Raymond! let me and Mr. Tom row."

"Just leave the handle off my name, Jerry, and it will work better," spoke Tom. "A long handle and a short knife don't work well together."

"No; you are not so large as I," answered Raymond, "and we must pull with all our might to get to the barge.—And say, Jerry! I've often thought that I'd rather you just called me 'Raymond,' too, without the 'Mr.' I don't like handles to my name, either."

"All right; it's jist as you say," said Jerry. "I kin get along without handles ter my name, and I s'pose it's the same with others. But say! she ain't driftin' so fast; we're close to her. She's only a little ways out in the channel; the snow made her seem farther off. But there's wind out here; that's the reason she don't go up with the tide so fast. The P'int kept the wind off us and the shore; but there's quite a stiff breeze—of nor'west wind, I guess it is. That's what keeps the barge from goin' up, and what makes her drift over ter the other side."

"Well, keep your eye on the barge, so that she don't get away," spoke Tom. "It would be too bad if she should get up and run away now, after we've pushed this heavy boat off and done all this rowing. Watch her close, Jerry; barges have to be

watched, or you don't know what they'll do, specially if they've got only women on board. Tell us when we come near her, for it would be too bad if we should sink her or run right over her, and not see where she is."

"Guess yer had ducks fer dinner, Tom, and swallered a feather the wrong way and it's got ter ticklin' yer," replied Jerry.

"No; wrong there, Jerry: had fresh pork for dinner. And there were no bristles in; so you'll have to guess again," responded Tom.

"Well, yer feel good, and that's all I care fer," answered the boy. "I kin go inter any snow-storm in the ice with folks, so long as they don't cuss."

"Have you been in many storms like this on the river, Jerry?" asked Tom.

"Guess I have," was the reply. "Had ter go ter get folkes more'n oncst when I didn't think I'd ever git 'cross the water ag'in in the ice. Down where I was the ice drifted mor'n what it does here, I guess, though I hain't seen how long it keeps on here."

"How's this, Jerry? I thought you said we were nearly there just after we started?" spoke Raymond, looking toward the barge; "and here we are just at the edge of the channel, and the boat a long way off yet."

"We've got a good deal farther than the channel; but if yer look close, yer'll see that she ain't much farther off," answered Jerry. "What yer

think is the edge of the channel ain't that 'tall; that's where the wind shows on the water. Yer eyes mebbe can't see so good 'cause yer been lookin' right at the lantern. Here we be. Hold up! There, Tom! Back water on yer left oar, er yer'll run right inter the barge! Mustn't mash her now, 'cause, yer see, it would get them folks wet what's on her. Mebbe they hain't got no dry clothes fer Sunday, if they git them wet what they wear."

In a moment the boat lay alongside the barge, and while Jerry was left to fasten the smaller to the larger vessel the other two boys scrambled on deck and went to the cabin. The women were inside, but at once came out when they heard voices.

"Is that you, John?" asked a woman's voice.

"No, ma'am; it's a Tom and a Raymond and a Jerry," spoke Tom, in reply.

"What are you doing here?" asked the same voice.

"We came to see what we can do to help you," replied Raymond. "You called, and we have come to take you ashore."

"Oh, we can't go ashore and leave the barge to drift. What would my husband say? It is his; he owns it, and all his money is put into the barge. If we leave, she will drift on some flats or middle ground, and the ice will cut her to pieces. No, no! we can't go. But can't you do something to help us?"

"What can we do?" asked Raymond. "You have no anchor to hold the barge, and it would not be safe to anchor here, right in the channel, with the ice drifting in heavy cakes just east of you. With the slightest change of wind it will come right down on you, and drift the barge with it, or cut her in pieces. The ice is very strong and the cakes are very large. It seems to me that you can't do anything but go to the shore with us, and trust to luck to save the barge. You can't do anything here. If the barge is lost, it will be all the worse to have you on board. Had not you better go ashore? We will be glad to take you all and keep you at my father's. We have a large boat, and can easily take you."

"Oh, I can't leave the barge," was the despondent reply. "Can't you do something to help us? We can't go ashore and leave her to be cut to pieces by the ice; my husband would never forgive me. Can't you do something?"

"I really don't know what to do. You have no anchor, and we can't pull the barge to the shore by rowing."

"Will you not try that?" pleaded the woman. "The wind is not strong, and you might be able. I am sure that my husband, the captain, will pay you when he comes back. I don't see what has kept him. He has been unable to get a tug to come through the ice, I am afraid. He would be sure to come if he could get one."

"What do you say, Tom? Shall we try to pull the barge toward the shore by rowing?" asked Raymond. "I don't believe we can do it; she is too heavy, and we have not much power, with only two pairs of oars."

"We can try," responded Tom. "You and I will get into the boat and let Jerry stay on board. We'll see what kind of a tug-boat we can make of ourselves.—Here, Jerry! you run out this line," added he, taking hold of a rope and hastening with it into the boat. "Fasten it when we tell you, and we'll see how much we can tow the barge."

For a few minutes the two tugged away at the oars with all their might, trying to pull the heavy barge toward the shore; but the wind was stronger than they, and slowly the huge vessel moved away from instead of toward the shore.

"Say, Tom! let us try to run a line to the shore, and we may fasten her and slowly work the barge in by means of the windlass," said Raymond.—"Say, Jerry!" shouted he; "let out more rope: we mean to try to get to the shore and fasten her to a tree there. There is a lot of rope on deck; fasten it on the piece that we have."

"All right; now go ahead," called Jerry as his nimble fingers gave out the line, and when nearly out fastened another to it. "But I don't b'lieve there's enough to reach. We've drifted almost halfway across the channel."

"Get all the rope you can," shouted back Tom.

"Take the halyards from the mast if you can get them loose."

Steadily the line ran out over the barge, and hurriedly Jerry, aided by the two women, gathered all the rope there was about the vessel strong enough to hold her and added it to what was running over the side.

"It won't reach," said Jerry, sadly, "unless they've got 'most to shore. I don't b'lieve they have. There goes the last piece. Say! ain't there no more nowheres about."

"That's all I know of," was the reply of the captain's wife.

"Well, I'll have ter fasten the end, er 'twill go overboard. We can't do it this way, that's sure."

The end of the rope was fastened none too soon; then came a straightening of the line, and in a moment or two a call from Raymond:

"Let out more line. We are not near the shore yet."

"Can't let out no more," answered Jerry; "it's all out."

The two boys were heard consulting for a moment, and then came the shout,

"Haul in the line, Jerry; we can't reach the shore."

The two rowers heard the cry of the women as they realized that the barge was hopelessly adrift and themselves in danger.

"This is getting to be serious fun, Raymond,"

spoke Tom. "She is 'way out in the channel, and not far from the ice. The snow is falling so fast that I don't believe the shore can be seen from her deck. We can't leave those women and children there, and I am afraid that they will not come ashore. Besides, when we reach the barge, we may find it hard to get again to the shore ourselves. We'd better be lively with what we mean to do. What do you say?"

"I say, too, that we have no time to lose, but I think we will come out all right. I am not afraid, so long as we can keep out of the ice. But one thing I mean to do, and that is to get those people ashore. The barge may be caught in the ice and drift safely in the channel, but there's too much risk. If she were to be caught by the ice and then shoved on some flat or middle ground, it would go hard with them."

The boat was alongside the barge as soon as the two boys could bring her there, while Jerry, with benumbed hands, was hard at work pulling in the heavy rope out of the almost freezing water.

"Pretty cold job that, Jerry," spoke Tom as the boat was fastened.

"That's so," was the response, "but I guess I kin stand it. My hands is useter this kind of work."

"There is only one thing we can do," said Raymond as he approached the two women, who were helplessly bewailing their sad lot: "you will be obliged to go ashore with us, and do it right at

once. The barge is drifting farther away, and we can't see the shore now. We are close to the ice; and when the barge gets into that, we cannot row out of it with the small boat. So please get ready."

"We can't leave the barge," answered the woman. "Will you not stay with us? The captain will pay you, I know, when he comes. I don't know what has kept him; he said that he would be here long before dark. He has been unable to get a tug, or it may have got fast in the ice."

"I am sorry to say it, but we must go ashore," answered Raymond. "I wouldn't risk staying here to-night for anything you might give."

"You cannot do anything if you stay," spoke Tom; "and if you go ashore, you will be safe, and the barge is in no more danger than if you remain on board."

"We're comin' ter the ice!" shouted Jerry. "There's a big cake right off there, close by, and we're driftin' inter it. We've got ter hurry."

"Oh dear! What shall we do? What shall we do?" mourned the wife of the captain. "If John were only here, he'd know what to do."

"We know too," replied Raymond, "and that is to go to shore. We must go."

Without saying a word more Raymond stepped into the cabin, and, taking one of the two children half asleep there, he wrapped it up in blankets and carried it to the small boat, and then said,

"Here, Jerry! take this little one and put it in

the stern of the boat, and you stay by it and watch that it is safe."

"What do you mean to do with my baby?" cried the mother as she saw the child carried out of the cabin.

"Mean to save it," replied Raymond, "and the other too, as well as both of you."

"Give me my baby!" shouted the mother as she went to the boat.

"Take care of that baby, Jerry, and we'll soon have the rest in the boat; and then for the shore!" spoke Raymond.

"Here! come, you little youngster!" said Tom as he caught up the other older child and was about taking it too to the boat. "We must take you with us; you don't want to stay here and have the ice cut this barge into kindling-wood, do you?"

"Mamma," cried the sleepy, half-frightened child, "take me!"

"I'll take care of him," replied Tom; "you get ready to go with us. We are not pirates, but friends. You can trust us; but if you don't trust us, you may as well let us have these children, anyhow, for they are too nice and good to give to the ice. Come!"

This was said to the mother, who at its cry had turned to take her older child.

"Must we leave the barge?" cried the younger woman. "Oh, what will John say when he finds it out?"

"He'll say that you was sensible ter take care of yerselves when yer couldn't take care of the barge," replied Jerry.

"Mary, we must go," said the younger woman. "We can't do anything here, and it may be—yes, it is—dangerous to stay all night here. Come!"

But the other had already begun to prepare to leave the vessel. Gathering wraps and whatever else she could lay hands on, she carried them to the boat and handed them to Jerry, who used some of them to cover the child.

"Are you ready?" asked Raymond. "Please hurry, for the barge is by the ice, and we may be shut in at any minute."

"Yes, I am ready," answered the older woman as she stepped to Tom, who was holding the older child, ready to hand it into the boat. "Now let me have him."

"Wait a moment, until I can get in to help you," spoke Tom. "Now give me the little fellow first. Here, little chap! don't you want to take a sail in a boat with us?"

"No; I want to stay with mamma," was the answer.

"But mamma is going, and wants you to get in first." With that Tom lifted the child into the boat, and then helped the mother in. "Excuse me," asked he, further, "but are there more than you four? That is all we saw, and supposed there were no more."

"That is all," replied the woman.—"Come, Mattie; we had better go. What are you doing?"

"I want to put this saw away, so that no one can find it," answered the young woman.

While she was carefully hiding the wood-saw under some covering on the top of the cabin, Tom had taken the oars, ready to pull for shore, and Jerry was loosing the rope from the barge, and Raymond stood anxiously watching the woman and urging her to hurry, as the ice was closing about the vessel.

"But if some one should steal this, we'd have to get a new one," answered the woman. "They will not find it there."

The saw carefully hidden, the woman took a last look into the cabin and then outside, but missed something.

"What do you want?" asked Raymond, impatiently. "You have no time to waste. Please hurry!"

"I wanted to find the hatchet," came the reply. "It is a good one, and I don't want that to get lost."

"Never mind that; if you wait much longer, we must go and leave you. Are you going with us?"

Saying this, Raymond stepped to the side and reached out a foot as if to step into the boat.

"Oh, don't leave me," cried the woman; "I will be ready in a moment."

"We have not a moment to lose; come at once,"

said Raymond, decidedly. "The ice is all around us, and we'll have trouble to get through it."

At last the woman hurried to the boat, and was soon seated in the stern by the rest as Jerry pulled in the rope and the boat pushed off from the barge.

"Let me row, one of you, won't you?" spoke Jerry. "You both have been rowin' all the time, and it's time I helped some. It'll make my hands warm ter row."

"No, you stand up in the bow and watch for the ice and for the shore," answered Raymond. "Beat your hands; that will make them warm sooner than to row."

"Yes; you are younger than we, and your eyes better," said Tom. "Old people cannot see as well as young folks in the night, you know."

"I guess you'll have ter have better eyes 'n mine ter see the shore," responded Jerry. "Hold on! There's ice ahead. Back water! Here! let me hold up that lantern, and then mebbe I kin see where the ice is." Holding up the lantern, Jerry saw what he supposed was thin ice, and said, "Turn to the right a little, and push ahead. That is only snow-ice, and you can push through. There! now keep straight ahead. Hold up! There's thick ice! Now ter yer left; that's all snow, and won't hinder much. Back water! There's ice ag'in right ahead —a big cake."

"See here, Jerry! which way are we going?" asked Raymond. "Be very careful that you don't

turn us from our course. Remember, we have no compass, and may get lost on the water. Keep your eyes clear and your head level. Don't lose your course by turning aside for the cakes of ice."

"Got ter turn out fer 'em, Mr. Raymond; can't run over 'em. We'd best get outen the ice first, then lay our course. Can't lay no course with that in the way. I guess it won't be long 'fore we'll be able ter see our course clear 'nough. We kin keep the light of the barge in sight, and won't get lost much so long as we kin see that."

"Well, captain, just you tell us what to do; and if you can pilot this craft safely through the ice of these frozen regions and into the bay of—of Raymond Leigh, we'll say that you are a first-rate captain and pilot," said Tom.

"Guess I kin do that 'thout much trying," answered Jerry, "so long as the wind lasts."

For a few minutes longer the boat was slowly pushing its way amid the smaller cakes of ice, but soon came to open water.

"Now we're all right," shouted Jerry, cheerfully. "We'll get there all safe now."

"How do you know?" asked Tom. "Suppose a whale should come up and want you for his Sunday breakfast? You'd get there, it is true, but where Jonah went."

"If Jonah went ashore, then it's all right; fer that's where we be goin' now," replied Jerry. "Jist you fellers keep on steady that way; I will stand

right up in this way and let the wind blow on my right cheek, and that will tell that we be going right ashore. Then, too, we kin see by them little waves. We must go right along across the way they swims."

"Waves don't swim, Jerry," spoke Tom.

"Yes, they do too," was the reply. "They be allers swimmin' with their heads above water; and every oncst in a while they shows their white faces, saying that they have jist washed 'em."

Under Jerry's piloting the boat soon came in sight of the shore, and then one of the women called out,

"There is the shore. We are almost there. I'm so glad!"

To reach the shore and unload the precious freight took but a short time, and then the boys struggled to pull the boat up to its former place.

"Can't drag it up that way," said Jerry. "We've got ter carry it round end for end."

"How is that?" asked Tom.

"We all take hold on one end and lift that as far up as we kin, and then take hold on the other end."

"All right; let us try Captain Jerry's way," said Raymond.

Carrying one end up as far as they could, and taking hold of the other and doing the same with that, the boys at last succeeded in putting the boat where they found it.

The four strangers were soon made comfortable in the home of Mr. Leigh, and Tom went to his own home thankful that he had been able to do a noble deed; while the other boys were not less thankful that they had done the work, and had done it safely too.

The next day the captain of the barge appeared in a sleigh at the home of Mr. Leigh and explained his absence. He had reached Navina in safety, but had been unable to hire a tug to come to take his barge. The boat taken to Navina had been stolen from him, he said, and he had been unable to return at night. He brought news of the barge. She had floated safely during the night, the ice having kept her from drifting on any flats or shoal water, and the Navina ferry-boat had towed her into that place early in the morning. Safe and sound she lay at Navina, waiting for her captain and crew.

The captain offered to pay the boys for rescuing his family, and said that they did the very thing he would have done himself had he returned. Neither Raymond nor Jerry would accept pay, and Tom, when told that they had refused money, said that he did not believe in risking his life for money, but was ready to try another night in the ice for the sake of saving women and children.

CHAPTER VII.

REFUSING TO ACCEPT STRENGTH.

SOME time after Jerry came to Metona, Mr. Leigh noticed that he was inclined to read every book and paper he could find, and could talk sensibly and intelligently about what he read.

"Raymond, that boy of yours has something in him that will pay for bringing out," said the father. "If you have time, give him help in starting to study."

"I have already, father," replied Raymond. "Jerry asked me one day if he might study one of my books that I had no further use for, and I gave it to him. Then he asked so many questions that I gave him some lessons, and have kept it up, teaching him as well as I can. He is a bright student, and I wish you would ask him some questions about natural philosophy; that is the book I gave him. I believe that he has learned all there is in it. When he read about a lever, he said, 'Why, that ain't nothin' but a pry to lift up heavy things with. Why don't they call things by names so that folks kin know what they mean?'"

"I think you would do him a great kindness, Raymond, to teach him to speak grammatically. He had better be taught that soon, or he will find the boys laughing at him. I think you might be of more service to him by teaching him grammar than by teaching him philosophy. That will come later."

Raymond did try to teach Jerry to speak more correctly, but with poor success at first. The boy could see no good to come from speaking according to rules that some other people had given, when he was able to make everybody understand his meaning without learning these rules. Yet he gradually changed his manner of speaking, and tried after a while to speak as correctly as others.

For the first few months Jerry made his study in the kitchen with Margaret, but Raymond asked him so often to come to his own room or to the other rooms of the house that Jerry gradually came to regard himself at home in most parts of the house. Mrs. Leigh learned to like the boy well enough to have him share the house almost as if he were her son. Jerry had too much good sense to force himself where he would not be welcome, and never went to any part of the house without first being asked or told to go.

It had been decided that Raymond should leave the Metona school and attend the Moreston Academy the year after Jerry came. One day just before the term began he said to his father,

"Father, when I go to the academy, I shall be obliged to study so much that I will be unable to teach Jerry; and if I stay from Monday until Friday night, I cannot teach him much, any way. It seems too bad that he should not study and have some teacher. I have been thinking that he might do his work mornings and nights and go to the Metona school. He could come home at noon to see to the horse and cows and other things. I wish he could keep on with his studies. I believe he will make a bright man. He says that he means to earn enough money, and then go to school and study to be a lawyer like yourself."

"I have thought of the same thing, my son, and think we can arrange to have him go to school and work night and morning. I see that he is a bright lad, and I must say that you have reason to be proud of him; for he is your discovery."

Before the time for school came Mr. Leigh called Jerry into the library, and asked,

"Jerry, how would you like to go to school?"

"Jist what I mean ter do some day when I get money 'nough. I'm lookin' out fer that now."

"Well, how would you like to begin this fall?"

"Hain't got money 'nough fer that yet; have only paid Mr. Raymond off fer them clothes and got some new things fer myself fer the winter, so can't 'ford it yet."

"Oh, you will not find it costing anything. How would you like to stay here and work nights and

mornings, and come home at noon to take care of the horse and cows and other things, and go to school where Raymond has been going?"

"How would I like it, Mr. Leigh? There ain't nothin' I'd like better. If you'd only let me do that, I'd work early and late and do up all the chores same's I do now. There ain't much ter do now; gardenin' 'bout done. I kin do it jist as well as not, if you think so."

"I do think so, and Raymond and I have talked about it, and he thinks as I do; so, if you wish, you may begin school with the new term."

"Mr. Leigh, you don't know what you be doin'. You're jist puttin' a new heart right inter me, and it's jist thankin' you more'n what I kin tell. But it's jist like what you and Mr. Raymond have done —so has Mrs. Leigh—ever since I came. Folks can't tell me that rich people don't care fer poor chaps. I jist know better 'n that. Hain't I seen and knowed?"

"Well, then we will count it settled that you are to continue with your work as you are doing now, only you are to do it mornings, noons and nights, and attend school the rest of the time."

"But see here, Mr. Leigh: I can't earn my wages then. I can't earn more'n my board. That's what fellers useter get down the river when they went ter school and did chores nights and mornings. I'll work fer that."

"Never mind about the wages, Jerry; you need

the money, and I can afford to pay it. If you were not here to attend to the horse and cows and other things when Raymond is away, I'd be obliged to hire some one else. You can do the work, and I am willing to pay you what I would be obliged to pay another; so it is fair to me as well as to you. All I ask is that you attend to the work, and the rest of the time is yours for study. Do your best, and see what you can make of yourself."

"Mean ter do my very best, Mr. Leigh. I'm goin' ter be a lawyer some day like what you be. Won't be so rich and smart, mebbe, but I mean ter try. If I kin only plead like what you did fer that poor chap what they said had been stealin', and you got clear, that's all I want ter do. My! I jist sat and cried when you talked. I said, 'That's the kind er man fer me ter be when I'm ready ter be somethin'.' I jist thought how I'd have felt if I'd been that feller, or how I'd have felt if they had tried ter put me in jail when I runned away from the old chaps down the river. Yer see, I don't b'lieve that poor chap meant ter steal: he only hadn't no friends; that's all. When you stood up fer him and said what yer did, he jist hove a sigh like 'sif he was histin' anchor out er the mud. Wasn't he glad, though, when he got clear! I want ter be a man what'll help poor chaps who hain't got no other one ter see ter 'em. I know how they feels. I was one of 'em too; so I know how it is. Don't mean ter help rascals get clear, though.

Them what's done wrong and knowed it ought ter suffer fer it, I say."

"Well, Jerry, I am glad to hear your hearty commendation of my efforts to save that man from prison. I believed him innocent, or I would not have taken his case. If you become a lawyer, you will be obliged to take the case of men who are not innocent; they may deceive you, as they have deceived others, and you will thus be led to plead for rogues. What will you do then?"

"If I don't know he is a rogue, I'll think he is innocent, Mr. Leigh, and jist work as hard as I kin fer him."

"What will you do if you find in the midst of the trial that he has deceived you and is guilty?"

"Guess I'd drop him like a fish what feels the hook in the bait 'fore it's swallered."

"But when the trial is half through, you will really be hooked and can't drop it. Or if you do, what assurance can others have that you will not treat them in the same way? In that event you would not be trusted with any case, and not be able to do any good as a lawyer."

"Hadn't thought er that, Mr. Leigh; don't know what I'd do. But guess I'll wait ter say till I've got ter decide. I don't mean ter help more rogues 'n what I kin get clear of helpin'; I know that."

With the new term Raymond started to school at the Moreston Academy, remaining there from Mon-

day morning until Friday night, and Jerry went to the Metona school.

This was a new experience to the boy. He was, however, no stranger to most of those attending school, and had become well acquainted with some. The boys treated him kindly and as an equal. In fact, some of them had learned by rather an unpleasant experience that Jerry was inferior to them only in education and position. They had tried to show that they could outwit the boy, and had soon wished that they had chosen another subject for their tricks. Jerry had proved that he was shrewder than any of them, and the laugh had been so completely turned upon the practical jokers that they concluded to let Jerry alone. His constant good humor and willingness to do a favor to any one, his quaint ways and his shrewdness soon made him a general favorite, though now and then a boy tried to show that he was superior to the lad of whom none knew anything but what they saw in him.

Jerry was a diligent student, and, though in one of the very lowest classes in school, he appeared to think that nothing more than a difference that it was his business to remove as soon as possible. He studied hard in study-hours, and played as vigorously when study was over. Though he went home for his dinner, and, as he said, "'tended to the chores about the barn," he was soon back, and as earnest as any for sport. The boy made rapid progress in his studies, and speedily rose in his classes.

Raymond found his new school requiring far more work than had that at Metona. He was a faithful student, and proved his excellence by his success. He at once took a stand among the best in the academy, and held it. Nor was he less popular among the students there. His generous nature and his readiness to help any one needing aid soon won for him the respect and the love of most of his companions. But his old habit of taking without permission what he wished, expecting to return it soon, followed him to the academy. It was some time before the others noticed this fault of the young man, and then most of them were ready to excuse it because of his generous nature. They thought it arose more from thoughtlessness than from a wish to take what was not his own.

On Friday night Raymond returned from school, and it was doubtful which was the more pleased to see the other, he or Jerry. Each had much to tell of his school-experiences, though Jerry, unusual to himself, allowed Raymond to do most of the talking. The boy was anxious to know all about academy-life, as he expected to attend there himself some day. Besides this, Jerry had learned that a boy shows wisdom often by silence rather than by talking, and he was slowly learning to practice that. He was less forward.

Some time after the holidays a series of meetings was begun in one of the churches of Metona, though two churches joined in the services. These meetings

were held each weekday evening except Saturday, and many of the boys of Metona school attended. There was no pastor in the Baptist church, and the services were conducted in the Presbyterian house of worship by Mr. Wilson, the pastor. He was a good man and beloved, but most of the young people feared him too much to be very intimate with him. It was of his church that Mrs. Leigh was a member, and Raymond and Jerry were members of his Sabbath-school; so were Tom Wasson and most of the boys heretofore introduced to the reader.

There had been a deepening religious interest in the village, and especially in the Metona school, since the New Year, and Mr. Wilson, after consulting with the people, and more than all with Mr. Hendricks, had determined to begin extra meetings to see whether some of the young people would not be ready to decide to become Christians. The attendance increasing with each service showed that the meetings were not ill-timed. Jerry was present every night, remaining up the later to study, and getting up the earlier in the morning that he might not lose time from his other duties. On Friday night, when Raymond returned home, Jerry urged him to go along to the meeting, but was met with the reply that it had been a hard week at the academy and he needed rest.

On the next Monday night Mr. Wilson invited any who wished to become Christians to meet him and others, after the meeting, in the inquiry-room.

To the surprise of not a few present, seven went to the room at his invitation; among them were Tom Wasson, Bennie Turck and Jerry Thompson. When the people saw Tom go to the room for inquirers and Bennie following, they looked at one another, as if to say that the two boys were up to some trick again.

"Well, my son, I am glad to see you here," said Mr. Wilson, addressing Jerry first; "but will you kindly tell me what you came here for? You know that this is the place for those who wish to become Christians; I hope that you have decided to become one."

"That's just what I want to be," replied Jerry. "I thought I was one. I used to pray and read the Bible, and all that, and hain't stopped, neither; but I see now that it ain't enough. I'm a sinner; that's what's the matter with me, and I want to get better. I've been feelin' so a good while, and it's growin' worse. I want to talk to somebody, and that's what I come here for. I'm a inquirer."

"I am happy to hear you say so, my son; then this is exactly the place for you.—Mr. Hendricks, I think you know this lad; will you please speak with him?

So spoke Mr. Wilson as he left Jerry to Mr. Hendricks and turned toward Tom and Bennie.

"Well, my sons," began he, "I am pleased to see you here, but trust I shall not be disappointed in my hope of finding that you have both come on

a proper errand. Do you feel yourselves to be sinners and deserving the wrath of God? I hope that you have seen the folly of serving the world, and have decided to turn to Jesus Christ as your Master and Saviour."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Wilson; I am a sinner," spoke Tom, in broken voice. "I don't believe there is a greater one in Metona. I don't see how I came to be so bad. I never thought I was such a boy as I see I am. It is so long, too, since I began to sin, and I have kept it up ever since. Do you think God will forgive such a sinner as I am?"

"Why wouldn't he?" asked the minister. "He says that he will. You can take his word, can you not? He says that he will blot out your sins and remember your iniquities no more for ever."

"Does the Bible say that?" asked Tom.

"Yes, and much more like it," answered the pastor. "I hope you may be led by the Spirit to accept Christ as your Saviour."

Then, turning to Bennie, Mr. Wilson asked,

"And how is it with you, Benjamin, my son? Are you a sinner too? Is it for that reason that you came in here? I may say that I am greatly pleased to see you here."

"I came here because Tom came, Mr. Wilson, and because I want to be better too," responded Bennie. "I don't think I am such a sinner as he thinks he is, but I may not have found it out yet. I have not thought so long as he has about this.

But that I am a sinner I know from what the Bible teaches, and I have always been taught that at home; yet it never seemed so to me. I believed it, though I didn't understand it, I suppose."

"It is the truth, my son, and I hope that you will soon learn to understand and accept it. It would be awful to live and die a sinner and have no Saviour. I am glad that you have begun to think about your soul at all. Do not you think it was a sin to wait so long, after God had offered you pardon and salvation, before you thought of accepting it?"

"I have not waited very long, Mr. Wilson. I am not a man yet, and couldn't have started many years before."

"True, but a year, when a soul is at stake, is a fearful time. Death comes and does his work in less than a year, less than a month, less than a day —yes, less than an hour. To have waited one hour after you could accept Christ might have been to lose your soul had death come in that hour. The very first thing a boy or a girl should do after becoming old enough to accept salvation should be to seek Christ. You cannot afford for a single moment to risk your soul. It is your all for eternity; if lost, it is lost for ever."

"I don't mean to put it off any longer, Mr. Wilson; I mean to begin to be a Christian at once, only I am not sure how to begin. Tom and I have talked about it, and he has tried to help me; but

neither of us knows as much as he wants to know. How bad must I feel before I become a Christian?"

"All you require to feel is that you are a sinner who needs a Saviour, and then you must go at once to him for salvation. Though you felt ever so badly, that would not better fit you to appear before God. Humility and a sense of sin are necessary to fit us to approach God, but we must trust alone in the perfect righteousness of Christ, and not in anything we can do or have done. We are accepted because of what Jesus has done; we must trust in his atonement."

"Let me see, Mr. Wilson. Excuse me if I don't speak what is right, but I want to know all about this. I don't want to make any mistake. You speak of what Christ has done—his atonement and his perfect righteousness. Now, does that mean that Jesus has done all for us that needs to be done, and that we must simply accept his work for us?"

"Yes, my son; you have the idea, I think. We had lost all, and could do nothing more for ourselves; so Jesus gave his perfect life for us, and all we need do is to accept his righteousness as our own. Indeed, it is ours if we will but receive it. When we take and use all that he has done for us as though we had done it ourselves, and use it as our own, we call that appropriating faith."

"I see: you appropriate to yourself, or take what is done by another, because he says you can, just as if it was yours really. Is that faith?"

"Yes, that is faith. You take what Christ has done for you as though you had done it yourself; you use his because you have nothing of your own. He freely gives it because he so loves you, because he wishes to save you, and all you need to do is to take and appropriate it."

"And don't I have to do anything more?"

"Nothing to merit salvation."

"Well, I begin to see now; but that makes it seem a little harder than it did at first. If all I must do about being saved is to trust in what Christ has done for me, and then must serve him afterward because of gratitude for what he has done for me in saving me, then I began to see how it is."

"That is the way, my son. But now please excuse me, as I wish to speak to others."

Tom and Bennie had a talk together after the minister left them, though Tom had listened to all Mr. Wilson told Bennie. We will, however, turn to Jerry and Mr. Hendricks.

"How long have you been trying to live a Christian life, Jerry?" asked the teacher.

"Ever since Miss Kiefer told me all about it," was the reply. Then the boy told what the reader already knows, continuing, "But I wasn't a Christian at all. I had just started from shore, and had headed up stream and then run aground; and there I've been sticking ever since. I looked at the water runnin' down by the boat and thought I was makin' good headway up against tide, but I was stuck

in the mud all the time. I didn't look to the shore nor up, but just at the water. I guess it's a good thing that these meetings begun, or I might have stuck fast all my life. Here I was thinkin' myself a first-rate feller, and b'lievin' that God thought so too."

"Then what you need, Jerry, is a new heart and the Holy Spirit to work a new life in you. Have you prayed for the Holy Spirit?"

"I guess not, Mr. Hendricks. You see, I hain't had so much chance as some fellers to learn, and I don't know what I ought to do. How is it about the Holy Spirit?"

"He is God, the same as Jesus the Son and God the Father. There are three Persons in the Godhead, but of that I need not speak now. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince men of their sins, to awaken them to see their danger, to show them how to trust in Christ and to lead them to the Saviour."

"Say, Mr. Hendricks, would you mind going closer to where Tom and Bennie are, so that they can hear too? No one is talkin' to them, and Tom looks as if he felt worse 'n what I do. Maybe you can help him too."

The two moved over to where the other boys were sitting, to the satisfaction of Tom and Bennie, and Mr. Hendricks continued:

"Jerry and I were just talking about the Holy Spirit, boys, and we thought we'd all talk together;

so I will tell you all something more, and you may ask me any questions you may have. I told Jerry that the Holy Spirit is needed by each one of you to enable you to see yourselves as sinners, and to teach you that Christ is your Saviour, and to help you to find him. Now let me say you should pray to as well as pray for the Holy Spirit. Ask him to lead you into the way of truth and show you how to accept Christ and how to live a faithful Christian life."

"Does the Holy Spirit teach us how to understand the Bible?" asked Tom.

"Yes, and every time you read it, if you bow your head and in a sentence or two ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand and gain good from what you are about to read, I think you would read with more profit. Study more about the Holy Spirit, boys, and as you grow older try to understand his work better."

"If we don't know about him, will he do us any good?" asked Bennie.

"While we should know about him, yet our ignorance will not keep him from our hearts," was the teacher's reply. "He does not speak of himself, our Saviour taught, but teaches of Christ and brings all things to the remembrance of the disciples of Jesus—that is, he brings back to their hearts truths that they have heard, and impresses them upon the heart. But he is the great silent worker in the hearts of the Lord's people."

"Mr. Hendricks, I seem to be like a man who has somehow got an awful load sticking to him and he can't get loose from it," said Tom. "Now, what am I to do? I feel it more than I can tell. It is as if it would press me down, so that I can't walk or do anything."

"Thomas, remember what our Saviour says to exactly such as you. He says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Go to him in prayer and trust in what he has done for you; trust in his word and expect him to keep it. He is the only one who can save you, and he is waiting to do it, but you must go to him—must trust your sins, your soul, your all, in his hands. You must give yourself entirely to him to be saved."

"I know, but I can't see how to do it," replied Tom. "That's what I've been trying to find out for some time. I have wanted to be better a good while, but couldn't find out what to do."

"Don't *do*, but *trust*, Thomas. Trust Jesus with your soul as you would trust a doctor with your body were you sick."

"I know you say *trust* and *believe*—so do others; but how am I to do it? I can't, somehow, get at it. I want to, but don't know how. I can't understand what faith is; that's where my trouble lies, I believe. Now, how am I to know what faith is, and how am I to get it?"

"I told you a few moments ago that the Holy

Spirit is the one to lead us to Christ; he is the one to give faith and to help you to believe. Ask him. Pray for the Spirit's power."

For a while longer did Mr. Hendricks try to lead the three boys to the Saviour. It seemed as if Bennie did understand, if he had not already accepted Christ, but Jerry was unsettled yet and Tom was in distress. The meeting closed, and the three boys started homeward talking of the one great subject, the other two trying to comfort Tom.

The next morning early, as Jerry was doing up the work about the barn before breakfast, he heard Tom's voice calling:

"Are you here, Jerry?"

"Yes; come into the horse-stable. What do you want, Tom?" replied Jerry.

"Say, Jerry! how have you felt since last night?" began Tom as he entered the stable door. "I'm just that troubled that I could hardly sleep, and early this morning I was up and wanted to talk to some one, so came over here. Do you feel better than you did last night? I don't.'"

"Well, I don't know that I feel any worse. I have been so busy since I got up that I hain't taken much time to think. I prayed, but waited to read till it got light. I thought I could do up some chores 'fore it got light, and save time. I want ter go ter meetin' again to night, so have got ter be lively."

"Well, I wish I could get to feeling better. I wish I could just make one good prayer. I feel just

like doing it, but don't know how. If I could do that, then I believe it would come all right. I'm like a feller in the fog on the water ; he don't know where the shore is, so wishes he could holler loud enough to get some one to hear and answer ; then he'd pull for that spot."

"I don't feel that way, Tom. I don't feel right, either, but I think it's comin' all right 'fore long ; so I jist mean to wait till that time."

"What! You are not going to stop, are you?"

"No ; I mean that I'm goin' on, but sha'n't worry about it, 'cause I know it'll be all right before long. I mean to pray and keep asking. I don't feel so bad yet about being such a sinner as you do, but that may come soon. Is it best to be feelin' bad all the time, Tom, any way?"

"How can a fellow help it? I wouldn't feel bad if I could help it. When you tumble through the ice and get wet and chilled, you can't help feeling bad."

"But if I felt so bad, I'd get out and run for a warm place."

"So would I, if I could get out ; that's where the trouble is. There is nothing to lay hold of to hold on to. My hands slip all the time, and I feel just as if I was going down, head and all under."

"I'm sorry, Tom, and wish I could help you," said Jerry as he brushed away at the horse he was currying ; "but, you see, I don't know any more than you do about them things."

"Say, Jerry! would you have any objections to you and me praying a while here? No one will hear us except the horse and cows, and we are not afraid of them. I hain't dared to tell any one at home about the trouble I am in, but thought that you might help me out."

"All right, Tom; I'm 'bout through. We can pray right here on the straw in the stable. I'm ready to pray; guess I need it."

The two boys kneeled down, and Tom, being the older, began. His was a broken prayer. He hardly knew what to say; words seemed to fail him. His heart was really too full for words to express. Coming abruptly to a close, he said,

"Jerry, you'd better begin; I can't say what I want to."

Jerry was far more ready with words, and prayed earnestly for his friend that he might find peace and pardon, and that both might become true Christians and not make a mistake about it.

When through, the two boys arose, and Tom was first to speak:

"You said just what I wanted to say, Jerry; it has helped me more than I can tell. I think I begin to see daylight now; yes, it is growing brighter. I'm so glad that I came, and that you helped me! But you are busy, so I will not keep you. You have helped me ever so much more than I can help you, Jerry, and I won't forget it."

Saying this, Tom started away, leaving Jerry to

hurry back to the house to get ready for breakfast and to prepare for school.

But Jerry did not study much; Tom's call and the sudden change had left a deep impression on his mind. Tom had been very anxious about his soul, had felt himself a very great sinner and had been in great trouble for some time, but now that trouble had seemingly left him. Had Tom become a Christian and he not? Had Tom taken the right and he the wrong way? Was he making another mistake? Would he keep on making such mistakes until his soul was finally lost? Was he making a mistake by not feeling sorry because of his sins? Tom had felt very bad about his own, and now had found the load going off and the darkness disappearing. The more Jerry thought, the more he felt that he was not feeling sorry enough about his sins.

When school opened, Jerry entered just on time instead of being early. He was not prepared in his lessons—something very unusual for him—nor did he give as much time to study during the day. Instead, he seemed in deep thought about something else.

At recess Tom asked how he felt, and received the answer that he felt bad enough.

"Well, I feel very different from what I did early this morning, and it is all the while growing brighter. I believe that my sins are all forgiven. I hardly dare believe it, but I am beginning to more and more. It seems too good to be true." So spoke

Tom, and his face showed that he did feel differently.

Bennie had little to say, but that little showed that he had understood what Mr. Wilson told him the night before, and had done what he was told. He seemed quietly trusting in Christ as his Saviour, and felt at peace—neither greatly elated nor sad, but peaceful. The three boys had few opportunities to speak together of the meeting the night before. The others were watching them and telling one another that Tom, Bennie and Jerry had gone into the inquiry-room.

That was a long day to Jerry; his heart felt a great burden, and he was anxious for night to come, hoping that then he might find relief. His great trouble was that he could not feel badly, as Tom had felt, about his sins. He really mourned because he could not weep for his sins. At noon he said that he did not care for any dinner, nor did he hurry back to school; instead, he went to the barn as if to attend to work there. He climbed up on the hay to begin praying God to make him feel that he was a sinner—to make him feel sorry for his wickedness.

Among the first at the meeting at night was Jerry, but it was not the old cheerful-faced lad; instead, it was a boy who had a great burden on his soul and was anxiously hoping and praying that it might become a hundred times greater. He had read the fifty-first psalm and felt that he could not offer that

prayer. He knew—or thought he knew—that he was not sorry for his sins, so he supposed that God would not forgive him. He supposed himself the worst boy that ever had lived, since his heart was so hard. He asked himself if God could or would take notice of such a hardened wretch who could not even feel sorry for his wickedness. It seemed that his was a hopeless case, and the poor boy was the picture of wretchedness. He looked at the peaceful face of Bennie and the happy one of Tom, and felt that he would give anything to be as they were. But then, he thought, perhaps it was because their parents were good and had prayed for them, while he had had no one to pray, or even to care, for his soul.

At the inquiry-meeting following the regular service Tom and Bennie were present, and of course Jerry was there. Nick Griffin, John Swart and Will Oster were there too. Jerry wanted to sit with Tom and Bennie, but felt that he was not good enough to be with them or with any of the boys, so he took a seat by himself. For a while he was neglected, as those who came to talk with the inquirers spoke first to the others, there being a larger number of inquirers than Christian workers present. Soon, however, some one noticed the poor lonely lad sitting by himself with such a forlorn look upon his face, and came to him and asked him whether or not he was sorry for his sins.

"No," replied Jerry; "I am not."

"Then why are you here? This is no place for you," came the reply.

"Where shall I go, then?" asked the boy, in a voice almost of despair.

"Repent of your sins, be sorry for them and forsake them, then come here; but don't come until you are ready to give them up and are heartily sorry for all the sins you have ever committed."

"But I can't be sorry," pleaded the boy.

"Then this is not the place for you. Only inquirers come here."

"But I want to be a Christian; I don't want to go back. I am not bad; I want to be good."

"Just as soon as you repent and feel sorry for your sins, then come here, and we will be glad to see you; but this is not a place for those who are not sorry for their sins, neither ready to own that they are bad." Saying this, the person turned away, and Jerry's heart sank within him.

Had Mr. Wilson, Mr. Hendricks, or some other person accustomed to meet the various temptations to which inquirers are subject, spoken to the boy, instead of this well-meaning but not over-wise person, it might have been different with Jerry when he left the meeting that night. He walked home alone, feeling himself unworthy to go with the others.

For two or three days Jerry was much depressed, and cared little to see or speak to others. One evening he spoke to Mrs. Leigh and asked what he must

do, and told her in a few words part of his trouble. She had not attended the meetings, and he remained home that evening as company for her in the absence of Mr. Leigh and Margaret.

Mrs. Leigh was surprised at his questions and unable to answer them, but they started thoughts in her own mind. She tried as best she could to give comfort to the distressed youth, but Jerry felt that he could not accept her counsel until he felt sorry for his sins as Tom had felt.

On Friday evening Jerry urged Raymond to go to the meeting with him, but received the reply that he was not interested in such meetings.

"That's just where I got in such trouble," spoke Jerry—"by not carin' for such things. Because I did not care whether I was a sinner or not, I've got so that I can't feel sorry about being bad."

"What's that?" asked Raymond. "Can't feel sorry that you are bad? What do you want to feel sorry for, then? If you don't feel sorry, it must be because you have not done anything very bad. See here, Jerry! you are giving yourself a great deal of trouble for nothing. Mother has told me how badly you feel, and I think you have somehow got under unnecessary excitement. If I were you, I would not attend those meetings at all; they are only making you feel worse. Stay home and go out for a sleigh-ride with me. I don't want to go to religious meetings in the week, and don't see why you should."

"But, Raymond," spoke Jerry, "I must attend to my soul. I've waited too long already, and may wait until it's too late, if it ain't that already. Don't you put it off as I have done. Go along to meeting to-night. Go, and then think about your soul. It's time to do it."

"Jerry, you've become too much excited about such things. I am doing well enough as I am. I am living a fair, honest life, and what more does God ask?"

"He asks you to repent and believe the gospel, and you hain't done either yet," replied Jerry.

"Yes, I do believe the gospel—every word of it: it is all true—but, as for repenting, what shall I repent of? I have done nothing very bad at any time, and, as for repenting, I see no reason for making a great time about little trifles that are hardly worth remembering. God will not hold them against me."

"What look little to you now may be very big 'cause you don't see them right. You look at 'em, maybe, like some folks do through a spy-glass: they turn the big end to their eyes to look at their own sins, and the little end when they see the sins of others. The Bible says—so does the Catechism—that 'all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'"

"Yes—all *men;* but remember that I am hardly a man yet, Jerry."

"But you know Mr. Wilson says that 'men' in

the Bible means boys and girls, and women too, just as much as big men."

"Yes, I know. But don't trouble yourself about me, Jerry; I am doing well enough. Of course some day I may become a Christian, but there is time enough yet."

"The Bible says, 'To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' That's just what I did, Raymond: I hardened my heart so it's got so hard that I can't feel nothin' now. My heart is as hard as a stone, and I can't feel bad, nor nothin'."

"I should say that you were feeling rather badly now—bad enough to suit any lively boy like Jerry Thompson. I would not care to feel worse than you appear to regard yourself."

"But won't you go 'long to meetin' to-night, Raymond? I wish you would; it might make you feel that you ought to be a Christian right off. Don't wait; 'tain't safe. You need to become a Christian right off."

"I think I can risk it to wait for a while yet, Jerry. My father has waited a long time, and seems to be doing well; besides, he is as good as most of the Christians I know."

"Hain't got nothin' to say 'bout him, Raymond; only I wish he wouldn't put it off. Maybe he's gettin' hardened too, like I be. He's as good a man as I want to find for this world, but I ain't so sure 'bout the next. I'm 'fraid he hasn't got

'quainted with God yet, so's to be at peace with him. If he hain't, then it won't be well with him in the next world."

"Well, you need not trouble yourself about him; when all Christians live as uprightly as father, I think the world will be better than it is now. Of course I think it is all right to be a Christian, but I don't see any need of my becoming one at present."

"But there will come times when you won't know what to do. Temptations will come like big storms; then what'll you do for a cove or place to hide in if you hain't got no God nor Saviour to go to?"

"Why, I'll do like the rest of you—go to God when I need help."

"But folks what won't take a partner when the weather is nice maybe won't find any when a storm comes. If you turn your back onto God when he calls to you, how do you know that he'll hear when you call? He don't let folks make a fool of him, more'n others do. If he ain't good 'nough for nice weather, I guess he won't be so willin' to help you out when it storms."

"Well, we'll see, Jerry. I respect your kindness, but don't believe that I need it now. It would be a strange thing if I could not do right when I had made up my mind to do it and set to work to do the best I could. I don't believe that a man is such a poor stick as that. The trouble with people is they have no minds of their own. I have determined to do right and be a good, fair, upright man; and, more than

that, Jerry, I mean to become a rich man some day. I mean to be rich and do a great deal of good with my money; now, see if I don't. Just keep that as a secret, and watch."

"Don't you think God would help you if you asked him, and the job would be easier if you took him in as a partner? That is jist the kind of work he'd like to have you do, I guess; but it ain't treatin' him right if you try it all on your own hook when he wants to help."

"But what's the use of having his help when it is not needed? Besides—I don't mind telling you, Jerry—I don't like to be held by Christian rules; they are a little too strict. They are all well enough, but I wish to be a little more free than they allow. Then, too, if I should become a Christian now, I must think about giving my life for some good cause, and could never become rich. Then, too, I would be obliged to give my money to everything belonging to the church, no matter what I wanted or did not want to do with it."

"I don't know how it is about such things, Raymond, but I don't b'lieve you are right; I guess the church will not make you give money that you don't want to give. And you can make as much money as you want to, if you do it in a right way. I guess you ain't the one to hold back money from them what wants it if you've got any to give."

"Well, Jerry, it is all right for you to urge this matter. You go to meeting and become a Christian,

but I will wait a while yet. My mind is made up to become rich, and I don't care to let anything prevent that. I will think of what you have said, and may become a Christian too after a while, but not now. I want to study all I can and fit myself for business; then, if I find nothing to do, I may take the time to become a Christian, but may wait until I am older. My father seems to get along quite well, and I will try his way until I find a better."

"He gets along well enough now, Raymond, but he hain't got to the end yet. But if he gets along well, that ain't sayin' that *you* will. It is a dangerous channel you are tryin', and you may run aground 'fore you know it. Then, if a storm comes, it may go bad with you. Better take Jesus as a pilot, like Mr. Hendricks told us yesterday. He knows the way and can steer us safely through the worst places: but if he don't go 'long, it is dangerous sailin'."

"I am afraid that my plans would be more hindered than helped if I became a Christian, Jerry. I don't mean to do what is wrong, but do not wish to be bound by strict cast-iron rules."

"It won't hinder, Raymond, to have a good pilot. It won't hinder to have good rules; they help when you've got to beat 'gainst the wind. A centre-board don't hinder the boat that's beatin'; it keeps her from slidin' off with the wind. It's the best thing to help her make headway. So it is with good rules and bein' a Christian. I can't tell 'bout them things like Mr. Hendricks can, but I know

that it don't hinder to be a Christian. I wish I was one."

"I wish you were, Jerry, if you are so anxious to become one. But why not become one at once? It is very easy, they all say."

"I meant to be one, but it is harder than I thought. I mean to keep on, though, till I get that whole thing fixed. I mean to keep on tryin' to find the channel till I do or till I sink; that's all there is about it."

On Saturday the boys met Raymond on the ice as all were enjoying a skate. Tom asked why he was not at the meeting, and was told that he had no time for meetings during the week. He wished to take time on Friday night to rest, so had gone out for a sleigh-ride.

When the boys were resting, after skating about for a while, others asked Raymond about the school at Moreston, and found their old companion as ready as ever to talk about school, and to them the same friendly, warm-hearted, generous fellow he had always proved himself; but when the talk drifted to the meetings, Raymond had little to say. More of the boys had gone into the inquiry-meeting the night before, and none of them could be together long without speaking of the meeting on Friday night.

"Say, Raymond, why don't you come to the meetings when you are home?" asked Bennie Turck. "I wish that you would come; they are so good! Tom and I and Nick and John and Will, and a

lot more of the boys, have been into the inquiry-meeting, and some of us have begun Christian lives. You know about Jerry, poor fellow! He feels awful, but he will come out all right before long, I think. He is really the best of the lot, and it seems so strange that he should be in such trouble. Why didn't he come skating to-day?"

"Jerry don't seem like himself of late," answered Raymond, glad to reply about Jerry without saying anything more about the meetings; for he had felt ill at ease since his talk with Jerry the night before. "He did not care to skate, he said, but wanted to attend to the work about the house and barn, and then said he meant to study for Monday. How is Jerry getting along at school?"

"First-rate most of the time," answered Bennie, "but for the last week or so he has seemed so blue and quiet that he has very little to do with us. But none of us fellows have felt like cutting up as we used to. I tell you, Raymond, we have become different from what we were, though no worse, I hope. We are trying to make up for all our pranks. We have just made up our minds to live as boys ought to."

"Why, have not you lived well before? I never thought any of you were bad fellows, and am sure that I don't remember anything that any of us did of which we should be ashamed, unless it be some of our mischief. But that we would get over in good time without any great change."

"I'll tell you what we are trying to get over, Raymond," spoke Tom Wasson: "we are trying to get over refusing to be Christians. We have started in good earnest, I believe, and mean to keep on: I mean to, that's certain. And I wish that you would come with us. It does not seem right to run away from our leader—that is, from the fellow who was always ahead in fun and what was good in the way of a good time. Now we've got the good time, and he is left out. I wish you would come with us and lead in this, as you used to in swimming, skating, sailing, fishing, and all that."

"Yes, Raymond, why don't you?" urged Nick. "You're one of the best fellows in Metona for fun and to help a chap have a good time; why can't you come in with us in this? We are having the best time I ever had. I never thought there was half as much real— Not fun—no, that won't be the way to call it; but half as much real good time to be had in this world as I have found the last day or two. I believe that I am a Christian, and the very thought makes me feel happier than I ever knew before. I can't tell what nor how it is, but it is all in here," said he, placing his hand over his heart, "and it is just full. It was so easy, too! I just did as father and Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Wilson said, and in a day or two it seemed as if I lived in a new world; and I have been in there ever since. Why, it's just as if I was in a world where it was

always springtime, summer, fall and winter all in one, with fishing, sailing, swimming, nutting, skating all the time; only it is ten times better."

"I have not felt exactly that way," spoke Bennie, "but I feel as if I had slowly awakened to find that it was a bright summer day, with not a cloud to spoil it; and the birds are singing and the locusts are singing, and the leaves are just moving a little, and the air is fresh and nice as it is the morning after a shower, and— But I can't tell all how it is; only the morning just keeps on, and the sun don't rise higher nor set lower. It's all summer and as nice and quiet as can be. I am not sure that I say it right, but I like summer and just such days, so I seem to be living in one right along."

"You are quite poetical, Bennie," said Raymond. "But come; let's take another skate."

"I don't care to skate as much as I like to tell about it," replied Bennie. "I just wish that every fellow had such a feeling, Raymond. You might have it if you would only ask; why don't you?"

"I mean to some day," was the answer. "But let us skate now."

The boys started off, skating together for a few minutes, but soon separated, and Raymond found an excuse before long to turn homeward and pull off his skates. Tom was with him and took off his skates too, saying that he wanted to see Jerry a few minutes before going home, so would walk along with Raymond.

"Say, Raymond," said he as the two walked off the ice; "you are not angry with us for talking to you about the meetings, are you?"

"'Angry,' Tom? Why should I be?"

"Well, you seemed so quiet afterward that I thought you did not like it; but the fellows didn't want to trouble you. We all wish, though, that you would come with us. I wish you would."

"Some time I may, Tom, but not just now; I am too busy with my studies. And you know that Mr. Hendricks used to tell us that we could do but one thing at a time, and do it well."

"But this is the best thing to do, Raymond, and the very one to do now."

"Yes, Tom, I know they say so, and it may be so; but I have time plenty for that, while I must hurry on with my studies, so that I may get into business at once."

"But this will not hinder your business nor your studies. I can study better since I started. You won't miss the time, and will make up all you may lose in a week after you have started. Won't you start now, Raymond? I wish you would."

"I am much obliged to all of you fellows, Tom, for your kind words and interest in me, but I think I will wait to see how you boys hold out."

"Better not wait long, Raymond; it's dangerous. You can easily reject the Saviour now, but not easily call him back after you have sent him

away. Don't risk it; you may want him the next time before he wants you."

"I thought that he always wanted us?"

"So he does, until we show plainly that we will have nothing to do with him. You wouldn't hang around a place long where you were not wanted, would you?"

"No, I think not."

"Then do you suppose that the Lord will let you turn him off time after time and yet be ready to come back just when you ask him?"

"I don't know. I do not turn him off; I simply say that I wish to wait and see how well you boys hold out. I am not refusing him; I am merely watching you as you prove that he does you good."

"Well, I hope you will find us doing our very best," replied Tom, with a sigh, "but it does seem hard to us to be obliged to let you stay behind."

"If you want to see Jerry, I think you will find him out at the barn, for I see the barn door is open," spoke Raymond, willing to get rid of Tom and his talk more than ever before in the life of the two boys.

Tom went to the barn and Raymond to his room, and as they separated their lives seemed to part, each going farther and farther from the other's path.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRIUMPH AND DISAPPOINTMENT.

JERRY and Tom had a long talk as the two stood in the barn—first about Raymond's indifference to religion, and then about Jerry's own feelings. Only part of this conversation is given.

"I am sorry that he has determined to wait," said Tom. "He is such a good fellow that he would make one of the best of Christians. People would just look and say, 'There's Raymond Leigh; say what you will of other Christians, he is one who can bear close watching and come out all right.' He never did anything mean when we boys were on a frolic, unless it was that he was a little careless about borrowing and putting back what he took."

"He is the best fellow I ever knew," answered Jerry; "he has done all he could for me. I won't ever forget it, either. He's just stood by me all the time. He helped me in everything; and when other fellows laughed at me and made fun of my way of talking, he just said that it was mean in them to do so, and that I had better try to speak correctly and he would help me."

"Is that so? I have noticed that you were trying to talk correctly and gaining right along, but did not know that he was helping you."

"Well, he was, too. I couldn't see no use in talking better if people understood me, but he said I had better try to change. It didn't make him no difference, but it did seem to make a difference to others. He said I might talk as I wanted to when we were alone, but must try to do better if others are by. So I do try if others hear, but don't seem to care much when he and I are alone. I guess, though, that I ought to be as careful when with him as with others. Don't you think I do gain?"

"Of course you do; you speak almost as correctly as any of us boys. We are none of us as careful as we should be, I suppose."

"Don't you believe he will become a Christian some day? I mean to be one if it takes all the rest of my life, and I want to see Raymond saved."

"I hope that he will become a Christian, but you know what Mr. Wilson said in his sermon the other night about putting off, when he preached that sermon about what Felix said."

"Yes; that was awful—that story about that young man who said that he would wait, and did, and then suddenly died, and when he was dying said that he had waited too long and now must wait for ever. My! The cold chills ran all over me after he told that story; and I wanted so much to get Raymond last night to go to meeting, for fear

that he'd keep on waiting too if he didn't. But he wouldn't come."

"Well, Jerry, how do you feel yourself? Is it growing lighter?"

"Not much, Tom; it's very dark yet. I can't feel bad about my sins as I want to. My heart is just as hard as a rock. *I can't feel;* that's just my trouble. I don't know what to do. I'm like a fellow lost in the woods: I can't find the path, and don't know which way home is. No; it is not that way, either, exactly: *I can't feel sorry.* I don't think that I am fit to get out of the woods yet until I feel real bad because I let myself get lost in it. There! that is just the way I feel. I did it, and am all to blame, but don't feel that I can sit down and cry over it, because I'm so hardened. I think that something else has got to be done, but don't know what. I wish that Mr. Wilson would preach an awful sermon to scare me, or something, so that I would feel. I seem to be so chilled through that nothing but an awful scare or a terrible shaking up will make me feel again. Sometimes I think that I have been given over to be lost. If I am to be saved, why don't I feel more about it? If the Holy Spirit is working with me, as Mr. Hendricks said, then why don't my heart feel that he is there?"

"See here, Jerry! I believe that you are wrong: I have felt so for some days. I can't say exactly how it is, nor can I put you right; but I know that you are wrong. Now, if you are in the woods and

lost, what'll be the use of sitting down and crying? Will it take you out? Will it help any to feel that you are to blame? Of course you are; but where is the most blame—getting lost in the woods before you think, or sitting down and crying about it and not trying to get out? Who is the biggest fool, the chap that strays away from home and gets lost, or the one who, when he finds out that he is lost, sits down and cries, but don't try to help himself out of the woods?"

"I suppose the one who don't try to help himself out when he is in trouble," replied Jerry, looking inquiringly at Tom. "But is that me, Tom? I'm lost in the woods, I know, but that is not all of it: I've got to go back home and say I'm sorry for getting lost. But the trouble is I don't feel sorry; I can't go back and lie about it. So what is a feller going to do in my case?"

"Well, I'll tell you what I'd do if I was lost in the woods: I would hunt pretty lively for a path out, I tell you, and let the crying-time come when I had nothing else to do. If I wasn't sorry for getting lost, I think I'd be all the more glad to get home, so would be sure not to run away again. If I was not sorry, I'd say it was because I was so scared that I didn't know how I felt. Let me tell you, Jerry, that if you don't feel sorry about all this, then I don't know what it is to feel that way. If your face hasn't looked as if you were about as sorry as a fellow can feel and still keep afloat, then

I don't know what I'm talking about. I tell you, Jerry, you are so sorry that you don't really know how sorry you are—that is, you feel so bad that you don't see that you are just simply swimming in sorrow."

"Well, I don't know how it is, Tom, but I seem to be the hardest fellow that ever lived," sighed Jerry.

"What if you are? Does a drowning chap have time to talk about water or how deep the channel is? All he's got to do is to yell for help and take hold of the first thing thrown to him. That's what you must do—catch hold of a promise and hang on as if it was a plank that would keep you from sinking."

"But what promise shall I catch hold of? I don't know of any meant for me."

"I'll give you one from the Bible: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' There! will not that do?"

"It would if I felt that it was meant for me."

"See here, Jerry! if you were drowning, would you ask if the plank that came in reach was meant for you? No, sir; you'd just catch hold and hang on, no matter to whom it belonged, so long as you could reach it and it would hold you. That promise says 'all ye that labor and are heavy laden;' that means you, and all such chaps as you. If you have not been laboring, then who has, for the past few days? Why, my boy, you've got more of a load

than you can carry, and Jesus wants to take it off. All you've got to do is to let him."

"Say, Tom, don't that mean a load of sin?"

"Yes."

"Well, don't a fellow have to feel that load of sin?"

"Of course."

"Then I'm not meant: I don't feel the load. That's just my trouble. I want to feel the load before I go. How can I go and ask to have Jesus take it off, when I know that he knows that I don't feel sorry that it's there?"

"Say, Jerry, can you can lift yourself over a fence by the straps of your boots?"

"No, of course not; but what has that got to do with this?"

"Just this much: you are trying to help yourself out of your trouble, and don't mean to ask Jesus for anything until you find that you don't need him. And, Jerry, you'll find that you can't do it, any more than you can lift yourself over the fence by your boot-straps."

"I don't see how I am trying to help myself, Tom. I am only waiting until I'm fit to come to Jesus—that is, until I'm really sorry and repenting heartily of my sins. I don't want to go with such a hard and don't-care kind of heart. He will not have such a sinner come to him."

"Will not, hey? How do you know? Where did you learn that? Is there a new chapter to your

Bible, left out of ours? Has this verse, 'And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,' been left out of yours?"

"Yes; that is in my Bible. I have read that lots of times of late, but it didn't seem to mean me, because I am not ready to come."

"Now, see here, Jerry! You are a good sort of fellow, and I don't know but you will prove to be a pretty smart one some day; but I don't believe that you are good enough yet—or smart enough, either—to make a Bible as good as the one we have. That has suited lots of men and boys better, and worse too, than you and I are. Now, why not use that as it is, without trying to put something in that the Lord don't want there? He said nothing about a fellow being awfully sorry, or anything of that sort, but just said, 'And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' Now, don't you think he meant what he said?"

"Yes, of course; but he wants people to come to him in the right way."

"He don't say anything about the right way or the wrong way. He only says about them that come to him, that he will not cast them out. Now, Jerry, suppose that was all the text a poor sinner who wanted to go to Jesus had, and he just did what that says; what do you think the Lord would do to him if he came?"

"I don't know."

"Then I do, and you do too: he would keep his

word; he would accept and save that fellow. The poor chap would come just as he was, with his hard heart and all the bad of his life loading him down; and when he came the Lord would not turn away from him, I know. More than that, if you go just as you are, he will take you too, and pardon you."

"But don't you remember what he says about looking to the one who has a broken and a contrite heart? I have not got such a one for him to look at, and I don't know how to get it, either."

"Well, who can give it best, do you think, if you can't?"

"I don't know. I've tried to get it, but can't."

"Then don't try."

"But I want to be saved."

"By whom?"

"By the Saviour."

"Don't believe it, Jerry."

"What do you mean, Tom?"

"Oh, I don't believe that you want Jesus to save you."

"But I do; that is just what I am after."

"Don't believe it. I'm in earnest. If you want Jesus to save you, why don't you go and let him? Why do you try to hide around corners, just as if you were not ready to meet him? I tell you, Jerry, if you want Jesus to save you, then you've got to go and ask and let him do it, and stop this getting ready. You'll never get any more ready than you are now. You are just like a boy who

stands ready to dive, but thinks he is not ready, so waits."

"But how about my sins?"

"Did he tell any of those people who came with their sick, when he was on earth, that they had better go home first and doctor up the folks a little before he would take any notice of them?"

"No, of course not; he healed every one who came, and at once."

"Right, and he is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. What is the use of trying to become better before you go to Jesus? He is the one to make you better; he will do the whole work. If he can't make your heart melt and feel, then I'd like to know who can. Go and tell him how you feel and what you want, and see if he don't do all you ask. Don't be mad, Jerry; but I've been thinking that the 'Old Boy' has been trying to catch you, and he has set his trap with a little of this want-to-be-awfully-sorry-for-sins bait, and you have nibbled, and the trap has shut down on you; that's the reason you've been so sad and miserable. You are in Satan's trap, and don't see a way out. Now, do you mean to let the old fellow get the best of you? He means to if he can only keep you away from the Lord by making you think that you must feel awfully sorry before you go."

"Do you think so, Tom?"

"Of course I do; I am sure of it, but didn't feel sure until just now. Here comes Nick; let's ask

him. There's Bennie too.—I am glad you fellows have come. Jerry and I have been talking here a long while, and I couldn't help him until just this minute. He's been feeling awful about his sins, and thinks he is too bad to go to Jesus because he don't feel real sorry for them; so I just told him that Satan had set a trap baited with a kind of bait that I call must-feel-awfully-sorry-for-sins-before-he-can-go-to-the-Saviour bait. That Jerry has taken, and the trap came down upon him, and he's been in that dark place all this time. Now, what do you fellows think of it?"

"I don't know," replied Bennie, "but it seems to me that Jerry is trying too hard to feel bad. He's just trying to cry because he can't cry about his hard heart and his sins.—Ain't it so, Jerry?"

"Yes, that's so," responded Jerry, with a far more cheerful tone than he had used for several days. "But I begin to see that I did not take the right way. I believe I am in a trap, Tom; that's a fact. Now, how to get out is the trouble."

"Somebody's got to help you, Jerry," said Bennie. "A caught rabbit can't lift the lid, but his best friend outside can do it. I think that if you just call to the One who helped us out of trouble you will find yourself free in a little while; I found it so. You've been crawling around in the trap to find a way out, and have not called to the Saviour."

"But don't I have to feel badly about my sins?" asked Jerry.

"What good will that do?" inquired Nick. "That will not help. You know that you are a sinner and need a Saviour, and you know that Jesus is the only one who can help you, and that he is willing; so what more do you need than ask him to help, and just let him do it? So long as you know that you are a sinner and want to be saved, what difference will it make whether or not you are crying about it? Crying about a trouble don't stop or help it, unless you cry to some friend to help you. That's what you ought to do, Jerry."

"Say, fellows, what do you say to our having a little time here praying for Jerry?" asked Tom. Then he told how he and Jerry had prayed early one morning in the stable.

"I just wish you all would," said Jerry. "I feel better since you all have talked to me, and, somehow, I think the darkness is going. It seems to me as if the trap—as Tom calls it—is just going to be raised."

After a little more talk the four boys kneeled down on some hay on the barn floor and held what might be called a prayer-meeting. Each one prayed, Jerry the last of all; and when he was near the close of his supplications, the boys caught the cheerfulness of his tones and were ready for his joyful words as he ended his prayer.

"It has come! It has come!" shouted Jerry as he rose from his knees. "It is getting lighter and lighter! The trap's up, and I'm a free rabbit!

No, I am a saved sinner! I am so glad! It's all gone! I don't care if I ain't sorry now. Jesus is so good he won't ask me to be sorry, for he has washed all my sins away; so there won't be much to be sorry about. But who would have thought that it would come so?—Tom, I'm glad that you told me about that trap, for that's what it was. Satan had caught me. I thought I must be ever so sorry before I could go to Jesus. I see it now."

Any one could see that a great change had come over Jerry; he was again the same cheerful, happy boy, only his happiness was of a deeper kind and had a new delight in it.

For several weeks the special meetings were continued; many of the younger people, and some of the old, became Christians. Among the young were nearly all those whom the reader has met with in this story, but Raymond was not among them. He remained the same friendly companion to the others when he was in Metona, but had little to say about religion. The boys soon began a prayer-meeting, but Raymond was not with them, always offering some excuse if he were in the village when the meeting was held.

Those who had become Christians among the boys were active in Christian life, but did not lose their boyish fun and humor. It was plain that they were trying to do right, but as plain that they were real live boys. When they learned to know more

intimately the good but dignified Mr. Wilson, they became free to talk to him of their souls. The pastor occasionally attended their prayer-meetings, and at the close stopped to talk with the boys. One day he asked,

"Have you boys thought what business you will choose? Has any one of you thought of studying for the ministry?"

This question was followed by silence, until Jerry, feeling that some one should reply, answered,

"I have thought about it, but I will be too crooked a stick for a minister. It wants better ones than I can be."

"Do not you think the Lord can strengthen you?" asked Mr. Wilson.

"He can do everything, I know, but then he don't use crooked sticks for canes when he can get lots of straight ones," answered Jerry.

"I have been thinking about it," spoke Tom, timidly, "but don't think I am good enough. I want to do all the good I can, but fear that the ministry is too high and good a place for me."

"I am glad to hear you speak in that way, Thomas; it proves that you have a proper conception of the ministerial office. But I do not ask for definite decision at present; I only request that you give the matter careful and prayerful consideration. If the Lord calls you into the sacred ministry, I trust that each of you will feel it your duty to heed the call."

After the meeting the boys waited until Mr. Wilson had gone, that they might talk over the matter he had suggested.

"I wish I could be a minister," spoke Tom, "but I am too bad a fellow, I suppose. I can never be as good and sober as Mr. Wilson is. I would be up to some mischief, I suppose, and turn the heads of the people just when I should turn their hearts. But, fellows, if I could be a minister and preach the gospel, I'd be willing to give myself to the work and do the very best I know how. I would be willing to go to Africa if I might but be a preacher."

"I've been thinking of it too, Tom," said Bennie, "but I am like Jerry—a crooked stick. I might do for a sexton some day, but a minister! Why, they'd never get over the idea if I were only to say a word about it at home. Yet, fellows" —and Bennie's voice became more serious as it grew softer—"I'm willing to do anything for the Saviour. I wouldn't like to die just yet— Yes, I'll tell you: I wonder if the Lord would really have me be a minister?"

"Well, I'm going to be a lawyer," spoke Jerry. "I can be that; it don't take so good a man to be a lawyer. Yet lawyers do lots of good if they try; I mean to try. If there are not many Christian lawyers, then I'll be one, to show that there is one, anyhow. I want to help fellows who are in trouble through no fault of their own. There are

some who can't do it, but lawyers could. I mean to be one; that's fixed."

"Well, Jerry, if you can be a good lawyer, I don't see why Bennie and I can't be good ministers," said Tom. "I believe it takes a good deal more to make a good lawyer than a good minister."

"How so?" asked Bennie.

"I guess it's a good deal harder to be good among devils than among angels," replied Tom. "Ministers don't have half the temptations that lawyers have. People know that they will not do wrong, so don't try them. But it isn't so with lawyers: everybody knows that they are no better than they ought to be; so every one wants to make them worse."

"What does Raymond mean to be?" asked Nick. "I suppose he'll be a lawyer, like his father.—Will he not, Jerry?"

"I don't believe he will," was the answer; "but if he is, he will be another good one. But, fellows, I wish that he was a Christian. Raymond is just the best boy in Metona. He's done everything for me. He's just treated me like a brother; he always stands by me and helps me. When I came to his father's house he took me in at once, and became my true friend. In those early days, too, when no other body cared for me, he did. He didn't make a bit of difference in me from the first. I tell you I want to see him a Christian. Can't you help me pray for him?"

For a few moments Jerry's appeal was unan-

swered. The tears in the eyes of the boy told how deep were his feelings, and not only did the others feel for him, but were themselves interested in Raymond.

"I'll tell you what we'll do, Jerry: we'll pray for him at the next meeting," said Tom.—"What do you say, boys? Maybe we have prayed already, but haven't agreed yet in praying. You know that promise of which Mr. Wilson told us—about two agreeing on earth. Shall we agree?"

Tom's question was answered that they would pray for their old friend at the next gathering. But they did not think that they might have begun before the next meeting by praying each at his home for Raymond.

Some time after this Jerry went to his room on Monday noon to get something, and found that five dollars had been taken from his pocket. He was alarmed. He knew the money was there in the morning, and now it was gone. Who could have taken it was a mystery. Jerry asked Margaret, but was told that no one had been in his room since Raymond left for school, and certainly she had not taken the money.

"I don't know who took it," said Jerry. "But it is gone, and has been taken since breakfast. I left it in my pocketbook when I went out to attend to the work. Mr. and Mrs. Leigh went off then, and Raymond went soon after; so I don't see what has taken it."

Margaret protested that she had not taken any money and never stole in her life, and that she was sure no one had been in the house since Raymond left. Jerry believed the girl, nor was he suspicious of any one. He merely could not understand how the money could get away.

"Well," said he, at length, "I am not rich, but I guess I can afford to lose it. Maybe it will turn up some time yet. I'll have to be more careful, that's all, and try harder than ever to earn money."

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Leigh had any knowledge of the missing money, nor could they guess what had become of it. Jerry was questioned very closely, but no clew to the missing money was found. All through the week there was questioning and search for the five dollars in the home of Mr. Leigh, but to no purpose. On Friday evening, when Raymond returned from school, Jerry told of his loss, and said he could not understand who could have stolen the money. Then, expressing in decided language his feelings regarding a person who would steal money, and so much, from a boy who earned it by hard work, Jerry added that he hoped the thief would not make bad use of it.

"How much did you say you missed?" asked Raymond. "Was it five dollars?"

"Yes; a five-dollar bill," was the reply. "I know I had it when I went out of my room, for I looked and felt it in my pocketbook in my Sunday trousers pocket; and at noon, when I went to look

for something, I found the five-dollar bill gone. There were two one-dollar bills and two quarters and three ten-cent pieces; but the five dollars had gone off somewhere. It's queer. I don't believe Margaret took the money, because she is honest, and she acts as if she didn't know anything about it."

"Say, Jerry," said Raymond, after the two were alone, "I borrowed that five dollars, and will pay it back soon; so don't trouble yourself about it. I found that father and mother had gone, and I wanted some money to use, so looked for you; but since you were away and I was in a hurry to catch the train, I just thought it would be all right if I borrowed some of you and told you when I came back. I had to use it, although I thought I'd need only three dollars of it. I'll pay all back in a week or two, when my allowance comes due. I think it will be as well if you say nothing to father and mother about it. I had to have the money to use this week, and my allowance is not due yet."

Jerry looked at his friend with surprise when told that Raymond had taken the money, but concluded to say nothing; yet the boy's confidence in his benefactor had been lessened not a little.

Since Jerry said nothing more about the money, Mr. and Mrs. Leigh let the matter drop, and soon it was allowed to rest without any further questions.

When his allowance became due and Raymond received it, he said nothing to Jerry about repaying

the money. There were urgent calls for it at the academy, so Raymond thought that Jerry could as well wait, and allowed him to do so without telling why.

One day, several weeks after missing his five-dollar bill, Jerry asked Raymond,

"How often does your father pay your allowance?"

"Once a month usually," was the reply.

"I don't want you to think that I am asking for my money, but you will not forget it when you have the money to pay? I am in no hurry, but thought maybe you might forget, since you have so many other things to think of."

"I have not forgotten," answered Raymond; "but if you can wait a while longer, I will be greatly obliged to you. I am in need of money just now at school, because there are so many things a boy must have there that he did not need here, and father has not added to my allowance. If you can wait till vacation, I'll pay all up. Then, if you wish, I'll pay interest on it."

"I can wait just as well as not, but don't talk of interest to me; I'm glad to help one who did so much for me, and wouldn't take any interest if you never paid. It's all right."

"But I'll pay you when vacation comes, without fail. Just now money is very necessary to me. I don't want to ask father for more this term—that is, more than my regular allowance."

Jerry, after assuring his friend that it would be all right and that he was in no hurry for the money, began to speak to Raymond about his soul. Thinking that, since Raymond felt under obligation to him, he would be the more ready to listen, Jerry said,

"Raymond, I was just thinking that there are other debts you owe to Another that you don't seem half as anxious to pay as you are to settle with me, and yet they have stood ten times as long."

"'Debts,' Jerry? I don't know that I owe any one else. Oh, perhaps I do some trifling accounts at the academy to some fellows who are good enough to lend when a boy is hard up, as I have been sometimes. But I'll pay them all, just as I mean to pay you up."

"I don't know anything about them," replied Jerry, "and did not mean anything like that; but there is a large debt that you don't pay, and I sometimes think you don't mean to pay. There is a higher One to whom you owe a great deal: you owe to God."

"Oh, is that what you mean? Well, I suppose I do; I hope to pay some day, but must wait with that account too."

"Excuse me, Raymond, but is it just fair to expect God to give to you continually, and you pay nothing back to him? He's doing it all the time."

"I don't know that it is just fair, but I am too

busy with other things just now to attend to that. I mean to give time and thought to it by and by, but not yet."

"Say, Raymond, a lot of us boys feel troubled about you, and wish that you would attend to this now. It will not be wrong to say it, I guess: we are praying every week at our meetings that you may become a Christian."

Raymond looked at Jerry for a moment in surprise, and then asked,

"Who told you to pray for me?"

"I don't think any one did. We just thought about it, and then agreed to do it; that's about all there is of it. Only I wish you would attend our meetings."

"No time just yet, Jerry; but I am thankful to you boys for caring so much for me."

"I wish you would care more for yourself, Raymond. You are caring for this life and neglecting the next, I fear."

"It does seem so, Jerry; but wait until I am through with my studies, and then you will see. I can't give my whole heart to two things at once, and I am trying with all my might to excel at the academy; I must take high rank there if possible. Then, too, I want to stand well among the fellows in sports and games; so that I must give all my thoughts to those things, with study."

"But will it not be so always? You will be just as busy when in business."

"I don't think I will; I will take time before entering business to attend to such things. I mean to do what is right, Jerry, but I may be quite long about it."

"It isn't a thing to waste time on, Raymond, 'cause, you see, a fellow is not sure about his time: it may suddenly end; then, if he hasn't got things fixed up, he can't stop to 'tend to them. Don't wait."

"Now, Jerry, I'll tell you—for you seem in earnest—why I am waiting. I'm too busy, for the first thing; then I have a plan in my mind · I mean to be rich some day. To become rich a man must not be too careful, I find, how he makes money. I don't mean that he must not be honest, but must not be so very scrupulous. If I become a Christian, I must be one out and out and give my time to it; that I cannot do if I am to become rich. I have thought the matter over, and respect your wish and what you say; but I am determined to succeed in the world. I mean to become a rich man; then I mean to use my riches for doing good. I don't mean to use them for myself alone, but for others. I hope—yes, expect—to live to be an old man, and so will have plenty of time to become a Christian. My purpose can be put in three divisions: I am first to study and become leader there as student, but more than that I may be fitted to take a good position at once; then, I mean to take as good a position as possible that I may make money; last, I mean to become a Christian to do good with my

riches. There! I have never so fully told the purpose of my life as now. You will keep it secret, I know, if I wish; and I wish it."

"Yes, I will say nothing if you wish; but, Raymond, I think you make a mistake. You can just as well become a Christian at first. I don't believe it will hinder your becoming successful in study, nor yet in business. You will do all the better in everything. It don't hinder anything good to be a Christian, and you don't want to do anything bad, do you?"

"Of course not—it is not that; but I have made up my mind to succeed in making money, and can't succeed as well if I become a Christian. If I am one, then I'll feel that I can't give my mind to getting money; that's all there is about it. So, if you would just as lief, I would prefer saying nothing further on this subject at present."

Jerry, not wishing to trouble his friend, was quiet, and sadly resolved to say nothing more, but to pray all the more earnestly for Raymond.

A short time after, Jerry spoke to Mr. Hendricks about Raymond, and without telling what had occurred let Mr. Hendricks know his anxiety and fear about his friend.

"If he seems indifferent," said the teacher, "we need not give up hoping and praying for him: the Lord is almighty, and is a hearer of prayer. Perhaps Raymond must first learn some lesson before becoming a Christian; he may hold to some idol

that must be shown to him in all its evil, or some sin that must appear to him as a sin, before he will give it up. Raymond is one of the best and noblest boys—perhaps I should say 'young men'—whom I know; yet even he has his faults. I can hardly say what they are beyond what you know, but there may be some hidden. You may be unable to do much by speaking to him, but you can do a great deal by praying for him. Keep praying, and the Lord will hear. He may deem it best to try your faith as well as to show Raymond the need of something more than a good moral life, but I believe that your prayers will be answered."

"Will you pray for him too, Mr. Hendricks?" asked the boy. "I am afraid that Raymond will not come out right unless we all take hold. He seems so good and kind that I am afraid he thinks he is good enough. He is the best fellow I ever saw, but that isn't good enough for God, nor for heaven, either. You see, Raymond has done so much for me that I want to do all I can for him. Besides, I don't want to see such a good fellow get lost. Then I can't help wanting to have such fellows in heaven; I want to have him there, 'cause I never saw a fellow so good to others. He seems a Christian all but giving himself to Christ and living for the Saviour."

"Yes, Jerry, but that is all the difference between being a Christian and saved, and belonging to the world and at last taking a place with the lost.

Trusting in Christ and giving self to him, submitting the will to the Saviour and allowing him to control, are absolutely necessary: we cannot become Christians until we do. It is not appearance, but the reality—not the outward works, but the purpose and faith of the soul—that decides whether or not a person is a Christian. I don't wish to discourage you about Raymond; on the contrary, I have great hopes of seeing him a Christian some day, but even that should not make us less anxious nor allow us to lessen our efforts a particle for his salvation. I do pray for him, as I have for all of my old pupils as well as for those now under my care. And I am glad that you boys are praying for one another."

"Mr. Hendricks, excuse me, but did you pray much for us fellows before the revival?" asked Jerry.

"Yes, Jerry, I was very anxious to see each one of you boys become a Christian; and it seemed to me that I had a great burden resting upon me that nothing but the salvation of each of you would remove. You can hardly understand how glad I am that so many have become Christians and are now helping me pray for the others. Keep on praying for them all, and not for Raymond only; you do not know what power prayer may have in restraining them from evil, even if it be not at once fully answered in their conversion."

"Mr. Hendricks, do you believe that some folks

must go through a hard time before they can become Christians?"

"I do not think that they *must*, Jerry, but they do—at least, many do. It seems as if the Lord lets them take their own way for a while, until it brings them into difficulty, and then they cry to him in distress because there is help nowhere else. So, seeing the folly of their own course, they become willing to follow his."

"Well, I wouldn't be surprised if that would turn out to be the way Raymond is brought back. I guess he'll come out right in the end, 'cause, you see, we are all holding fast to him by our prayers."

"Perhaps that will be the way with him," replied the teacher; "at all events, it is our privilege to pray for him."

"Now, Mr. Hendricks, I want to ask you one thing more; it has troubled me a good deal lately: do you think every young man or boy who becomes a Christian should be a minister? You see, Mr. Wilson told us to think about it, just as if he wanted us to think that we must. Now, I am willing, but it don't seem that I'm the one to be a preacher."

"Jerry, I am glad that you have thought about that and are willing to become a minister of the gospel; I hope that you and some of the other boys will become ministers. Many more preachers are needed. Were I a young man just starting, I would study for the ministry."

"But, Mr. Hendricks, if a stick is made crooked

and you want a straight one, will it not be better to get a straight one and use the crooked one when you want one of that kind?"

"I don't quite understand you, Jerry."

"Well, a minister must be made out of a straight stick: I am a crooked one; that's all. I'm made for something else; I want to be what God made me for, and not something else. You said that he made us each for something, and I just want to be that. I ain't made for a minister."

"How do you know, Jerry?"

"'Cause I'm a crooked stick. I ain't one of the good straight kind like Mr. Wilson."

"Neither are many others who have proved to be excellent ministers. If the Lord wants you to become a minister, even though you *are* a crooked stick, he can easily fit you for his work."

"But crooked sticks were made so for something, Mr. Hendricks, and why not use them for what God made them? Now, I'll tell you what I've thought he made me for. I want to be a lawyer; I can be that. If I'm only a crooked stick, the crooks will let me get close to others, and then, maybe, I can hold fast to them and pull them out of trouble; but if I was straight, I'd just slip past lots of fellows that I wanted to help."

"I hardly know what you mean by 'a crooked stick,' Jerry, but I have seen nothing in you that gave me reason to believe you are not equal to others. If you try to do what you can, you may

make yourself as good as any one. You have a mind fully equal to the average, and I think would become a faithful and successful preacher of the gospel. Yet if you think it your duty to become a lawyer, and feel sure that you can serve the Lord best in that way, do not hesitate. I know that the Lord has need of good lawyers as well as of good ministers."

"That is just what troubled me: I thought that maybe he did not want any lawyers at all. I know that they do good, though, and I wanted to do it that way—that is, I wanted to do good by being a lawyer. Mr. Leigh does lots of good; he helps poor chaps out of trouble lots of times, and he helps those who can't get any one to do it 'cause they hain't got money. *He* don't say much, but Raymond told me that he often don't get anything for what he does; yet he keeps doing it. Sometimes, when bad men get hold of a poor fellow, they lead him off, and he gets into a scrape 'fore he knows; then they run off and let him suffer. That's the kind of fellow I want to help. Then poor widows and other folks who hain't any one to help want a good lawyer to tell them what to do; so there's other ways that a lawyer can do lots of good. I wanted to be one to do good. Then I thought that maybe I could get hold of bad fellows, and, being I am a lawyer, they'd listen and I'd help them get right again. You see, they would run away from a minister, but they'd think a

lawyer was like themselves; so I'd get them to start right 'fore they knew what I was after them for."

"Yours is surely a good motive, Jerry, and I do not see that you are wrong in wishing to be a lawyer; but take time to think and pray over it. Be willing to do what the Lord wishes. Don't forget that there are many lawyers and few ministers."

"Yes, Mr. Hendricks, but the good men who are lawyers are not as plenty as ministers, I've heard; so it seemed to me that the Lord wanted me to become a lawyer, and a good one, to help make the rest better and help save them who don't get anybody to talk to them but lawyers."

"I see! You think that you will go on a mission among the lawyers."

"Not that, Mr. Hendricks, but on a mission to them who don't get anything good but what lawyers give."

One evening, as the boys were gathered at their prayer-meeting, Jerry suggested that they pray specially for Raymond, giving as a reason that he was going out into the world before long, and, having passed through a revival, might have become hardened, so would go out into the world without anything to keep him from evil.

"He is not a Christian, it is true," muttered John Swart, "but he is better than half of the Christians in the world."

These meetings, when Mr. Wilson was absent, were informal, and were conducted something as the

boys would have conducted some less religious gathering—by giving each full liberty to speak as he wished. Rarely, however, was any such remark made as John Swart had just uttered. He was inclined to be a little critical, though a good-hearted and really earnest boy.

"How did you come to know half the Christians in the world?" asked Tom Wasson after the meeting.

"I didn't mean half that are in the world, but half of those whom we know," answered John.

"But why do you judge them?" inquired Tom.

"Just as the Bible tells us," replied John—"by their fruits."

"By the good or bad fruits?" persisted Tom.

"By both," was the answer. "Yet I guess that you would have to look a good while to find any good fruit in some Christians."

"That may be," responded Tom; "only I don't know who those Christians are. Of course you may know quite a good many whom the rest of us do not. But say, John! would it not be well to find better companions than you have among Christians? It may have a bad effect upon you."

This was said with such a sober face and solemn tone that others than John thought Tom entirely serious.

"Oh, I guess I have as good company as the rest of you," replied John. "I don't care to have anything much to do with those hypocrites."

"So they are real hypocrites? You are sure of that are you, John?" inquired Tom.

"Yes, I am," was the reply. "And they are not as good Christians as Raymond Leigh, either."

"No doubt you are right in your last assertion if the first be correct," suggested Tom, gravely. "If they are hypocrites, then Raymond, who professes that he is not a Christian, is better than they are. Yet hold on, John! He neither is nor professes to be a Christian; how can he be a better one than those who profess, even if they do not possess? Is that exactly right? I don't believe in being a hypocrite, yet he who is one at least honors the cause enough to pretend to belong to it, while he who refuses even to profess to belong to it places himself on the other side. I am as much opposed to hypocrites as you are—that is, I think I would be if I knew any, but I don't—yet I don't believe in making a Christian of any one because he don't happen to be a hypocrite. Something more than just being good enough to suit the world is needed to suit God or to be worthy the name of 'Christian.' I am as warm a friend of Raymond as any fellow here, but because he is a good fellow with us is no proof that he suits the Lord, and it is not fair to say that because we like him the Lord must."

"Quite a speech, Tom!" said Will Oster; "and I agree with you. I don't believe in calling people hypocrites because they are not perfect. When I look to myself, I see enough to make me ashamed

of my evil deeds and thoughts; but I am not a hypocrite, even though as full of bad habits as can be. If the water be dirty, that don't prove that it wants to have the dirt there; it only shows that dirt has somehow got in. Let it stand and settle, and where will your dirt be? It is what we want to keep and hold fast to that shows what we are. I don't think it is fair to call a man a hypocrite who don't mean to do wrong, yet falls into sin. Watch and see if he don't repent and try hard to do better. Hypocrites don't repent; they are satisfied with what they are."

"Right, Will!" spoke Bennie. "I get tired of hearing people call this and that Christian a hypocrite, when everybody knows that they don't mean to pretend to be what they are not.—Say, John! if you judge people by their fruits, which fruits are you to take—the best or the poorest?"

"Take all," answered John. "The best will not tell, nor will the worst, either, but all will show what the tree does."

"Is it fair to judge a tree by what it does not bear?" asked Tom. "That is, you wouldn't blame a tree for what it had nothing to do with, would you?"

"Of course not," replied John. "But we do judge it by the fruit we find on or under it."

"Yes," replied Tom, "and some trees by that which is not fruit at all. Say, John! is the worm in the apple part of the fruit?"

"It belongs to it," replied John.

"About as much as the apple belongs to a thief who stole it," spoke Bennie.

"It don't belong to the fruit, nor yet to the tree," said Tom. "If either apple or tree had anything to say about it, it would say that it hated the worm as much as anybody, but couldn't get rid of it."

"Oh, now, see here, fellows! you needn't all be pitching into me because I said some people are hypocrites; I didn't say all are. But you know some are no credit to the church," spoke John.

"That is somewhat of a change in your views, is it not, John?" said Nick. "Not converted so suddenly, are you? But no matter; I don't blame you for not wishing to argue against all the rest, when none know the persons of whom you speak, since you say that so many are hypocrites. The fact is people judge Christians to be bad by a few acts, but will not admit them to be good though they have the witnesses of a lifetime. That is what I have heard father say."

"And I have heard my father say that you can't tell what a man is until he is tried," interrupted James Relyea, coming to John's aid.

"You are right, Jim," said Tom. "I guess that if Christians were tried you would find them coming out all right, if the trial were a fair one."

"I am not sure of that," urged James. "You have seen what some were after a trial."

"I have seen what some were after people had

been throwing dirt at them," replied Bennie. "But the dirt was not the character of those whom it hit; if the dirt represented any one, it was the one who threw it."

"John, after all, it is not the bad look of the man so much as his real self that tells who he is," added Tom. "I don't believe that any one thinks more of Raymond than I do, but I tell you he is not a Christian, with all his first-rate qualities. What he needs is to become a Christian—to believe in Christ—before he can be saved. His good moral character will do with us, but it will not pass with God. You may take a nice new bank-bill to the bank; and if it have not the signature of the president and the cashier, what will it be good for? But you may take a bill there, and, no matter how dirty and torn, if it but have the names of both officers in their own handwriting, it will pass, while the other is rejected. Now, it is the same with good outward appearance. It is good to have—far better than that which is not so fair; but, no matter how fair, if the name of Jesus Christ be not on it, it will not pass with God; it will not be admitted to heaven."

"Pretty good, Tom!" said Will. "But you don't mean to say that a good Christian life, no matter how fair, is of little account, do you?"

"Not a bit of it, Will. I may not say exactly what I mean, for I am not used to this kind of talk. I mean that a life with Christ's name on it is better

in God's sight, even though it is not as good as it might be, than a life that is outwardly good, yet will not have anything to do with the Saviour. Maybe I don't make it plain to you all, but I want to say that Christ makes up in the eyes of God for what his people don't have—that is, God knows that we can't do all he wishes his children to do; so he lets the Saviour make up for what they lack. That is the way I understand it. Now, Raymond don't take any share in Christ at all; so he don't have any such good of the Saviour put to his account. That's where I think he misses it. He is a good fellow for this world; he suits us, for he is better than most of us; but he will not suit God: he is not good enough for heaven. That's what troubles me. I want to see every fellow in Metona reach heaven. That's why I am anxious to see Raymond a Christian. That's Jerry's reason.—Ain't it, Jerry?"

"Yes," quietly answered Jerry, who had been a silent listener during the whole discussion. "I do wish you fellows would keep on praying for him. He needs it because he don't see how much he is losing when he don't care to become a Christian yet. He only needs one thing, but he needs that very much. If he don't get it before he goes out into the world to business, I'm 'fraid he won't get it soon, if he ever does."

CHAPTER IX.

COWARDLY, YET BRAVE.

EARLY in the summer, as vacation-time approached, Raymond invited his old friends of Metona school to be present at Moreston Academy to attend the closing exercises. For one reason and another all except Jerry and Tom were unable to go, and Tom waited until afternoon, while Jerry started with the morning train on the day that the academy was to close. Raymond met him at the station, and the two took a walk before the time for the exercises of the morning session.

Jerry was surprised to find his friend unusually gloomy, and asked after a few moments,

"Say, Raymond! what's the matter? You are as downhearted as if things had gone wrong. Didn't you pass examinations?"

"Yes, I passed all right," was the reply, "but I guess I feel a little blue about leaving school. It makes a fellow feel that way, I suppose. Maybe I feel worse than some of the others."

This answer, however, did not satisfy Jerry, who saw that another trouble of some kind was disturbing Raymond.

When they approached the academy, Raymond suddenly asked,

"Say, Jerry, can you lend me some money? I am hard pressed for it just now; and if you can help me out, I will pay you when I get the money, in vacation. Then I'll pay that other five dollars I owe you. I am sorry that I have not had the money to pay before, but, somehow, it costs a great deal at school. Then I've had extra expenses."

"I have got only five dollars with me," answered Jerry, "but you can have that and welcome."

"Have you no more home?"

"No; I lent out all I had to Mr. Burling. He promised to pay interest on it; so I was glad to let him keep it for me till I want it. Your father has been so good to me that I have had money to lend, and then you have almost kept me in clothes, so that I don't have to spend hardly any. You see, I am keeping all I can until I can go to the academy too."

"Will you let me have that five dollars?" asked Raymond, despondingly. "I wish you had more; I'm in a bad fix."

"Of course I'll let you have it," replied Jerry; "only I wish it was ten times more, if that would help you out."

"I wish it was ten times more," answered Raymond, taking the money that Jerry handed him. "I don't see how I got in this fix. You may hear the boys talk about it, and I feel sorry that I have

given them reason to talk. Wait! it isn't quite time yet," continued Raymond, as Jerry was about to turn into the academy-yard. "That is only the first bell; let us take a short walk yet. I don't want to meet the fellows, and I want to tell you about this."

As the two walked away, Raymond, after a few moments' silence, during which Jerry wondered what was the matter with his friend, began:

"Jerry, I don't see how it came about, but I am short of money and owe not only ome of the fellows, but, what is worse, I owe our society. You see, we started a literary society—rather, it was started when I came—and I was chosen treasurer some time ago. I had no place to keep the money where it would be safe, so put it with my own, and merely kept an account of what I received and paid for the society. When I came to square up, I found that I was over thirty dollars short—all the money the society had, and it was needed for the closing exercises of the year. I had to tell them last night that I could not account for the money in any other way than that I had kept it with my own and used it up. I felt awfully troubled to say that I had used what did not belong to me, yet they took it kindly when I said that I would pay it all back to-day, and that it happened because I was careless in not keeping it separate from my own. But now I am in a fix. I can't get the money before school closes, and so can't pay the bills."

"How much will you need?" asked Jerry, who saw that Raymond felt too bad already to need any rebuke.

"If I had twenty-five dollars more, I think, with this five you have lent me, I could get through. I can get the others whom I owe to wait. But where can I get that twenty-five dollars?"

"Can't you borrow it from some one here or in the village? I wish I had that which I lent Mr. Burling; that would help you out all right. But I can't get that, for I promised to let him have it for a year."

"Well, I don't know what to do," responded Raymond, with a despairing sigh. "I would do almost anything if I had that money. I can't go anywhere to get it now, for it will soon be school-time, and two classes to which I belong have what we call 'a show-off'—or a public examination—this morning, and I must be there. I want you to be there too. But, Jerry, if you could help me out of this scrape, I would never forget it."

"Say, Raymond!" spoke Jerry; "Tom Wasson is coming this afternoon: how would it do to send him word to borrow the money and bring it? But can't you borrow any here?"

"I don't like to try, Jerry; I owe several of my friends, and it would be too bad to ask them for more money. I don't know about Tom; where can he get money to lend me?"

"Tom has some of his own, and I guess he could

stir around and get more before dinner. I don't believe I could get back to Metona; there is no train that stops there until afternoon, any way."

"But how shall we let Tom know," asked Raymond. "We can't send a letter: the mail has gone. He wouldn't get it even if we could, as he might not go to the office."

"Send a telegraph-message. It will cost money to send it, but better spend it that way than some other if it helps you out. Say, Raymond! I'll go down to the office and send a message to Tom, and I'll pay for it with the money I kept to buy dinner with. I'll have a bigger appetite when I get home to-night then."

"No, Jerry; take some of this money. Don't you starve yourself to help me."

"Never you mind now, Raymond. There goes the bell, and you must go to school. I'll try to get that money. I'll be in to hear you tell what you know about things. Which way must I go in? I don't mean to miss hearing and seeing all I can."

Raymond did not refuse to let Jerry have his way. Indeed, the young man was so troubled that he was willing to do almost anything and to ask almost any favor to get himself out of trouble that was nearly overwhelming him. Telling Jerry how to find the room where the examinations and other public exercises were to be held, and thanking his kind friend for his promise to help, Raymond turned to go into

the academy as Jerry hurried away to send a telegram to Tom.

This was new work for Jerry. He had never sent a telegram in his life and did not know how to do it, but, with his independence of character, was ready to try anything. Entering the office, he asked,

"What'll you charge me to send a message to Metona?"

"That will depend on its length," was the reply. "Write it, and I will tell you."

Jerry took the pencil and paper offered and began writing, scratching his head at about every third word, and scratching out nearly as many words as he left. At length he handed the paper with the words,

"Raymond is awfully hard up for money to pay off some bills. Can you borrow twenty-five dollars from somebody and bring it down this afternoon? He must have it. Get the money somewhere, or he'll be in the worst fix ever was. It will be all right."

"How much will you send that to Metona for?" asked he. "I guess it's about right."

"That will be one dollar and sixty-seven cents," replied the operator, after counting the words.

"'One dollar and sixty-seven cents'!" almost shouted Jerry. "Whew! I guess you're used to dealin' with rich folks. I ain't one of them; I'm a poor fellow who can't afford to pay no such a price.

Don't you come down on it for a poor chap who hasn't got more'n fifty cents? I want to send that news awful bad, but I hain't got the money."

Then, thinking for a while after the agent had told him that he could not take less than the regular price, Jerry asked,

"Can you send fifty cents' worth?"

"Yes, but that is the smallest amount I can send," answered the operator. "We charge by the word. For the first ten words it is fifty cents; after that, three cents for each additional word. But we don't send less than ten words—rather, don't send a message for less than fifty cents."

"Well, that's awful steep for such a little ways, but I'll have to try. I want to send this the worst way; it's got to go. Fifty cents I can stand, though it's all I've got. Let me see;" and he took the telegram. "What shall I drop out? Why, here's forty-nine words! Don't you let two little ones go for half price, like children on the cars? Some of these has got only two and three letters. It ain't fair to charge just as much for them as for words that has lots of letters in."

"We charge so much a word," replied the good-natured operator, "and you may make your words as large as you wish, or as small, if they are single words, and not compound ones. I guess you can put that in ten words, or can tell what you wish to say in fewer words."

After scratching out word after word and writing

and rewriting, Jerry at last succeeded in putting his message in words reading,

"Raymond wants twenty-five dollars awful. Get money somehow. Hurry!"

"But what name will you sign to this?" said the operator, taking the message. "Put your name to it."

"Why, do you send my handwriting too?" asked Jerry.

"We must have some name to show who sent it. And then what would your friend say if he got such a message with no name signed? He would say that it was a joke."

"But Tom will know my handwriting," replied Jerry, "if you send that. Sure enough! I wouldn't send a letter without putting my name to it. You see, I'm in a bother about this, and don't do as I might if I wasn't worried about what I want to get for a fellow. But how soon will he get it?" asked Jerry as he signed the telegram and handed it to the man.

"I'll send it right on; he'll get it as soon as they can deliver it at Metona. How far does he live from the station?"

"Not half a mile; maybe it is not more'n a quarter.

Soon after sending the message Jerry hastened back to the academy. He found some boys talking outside; they had nothing to do, and preferred to remain outside to being in the schoolroom listening

to a dry examination. They were, however, talking of a more important subject; at least, it interested Jerry more. He could not help listening, as he heard the name of "Leigh" often repeated, and one used the name "Raymond" instead.

The boys were talking of Raymond and of the missing money. Not suspecting that Jerry knew anything about the man of whom they were speaking, they took little notice of him. He, however, gathered from what they said that Raymond owed much more than the thirty dollars to the treasury of the society. He had evidently borrowed from these boys and from others, and they were anxious to get their money back. Unwilling to listen longer, yet anxious to know all, Jerry moved slowly on and entered the schoolroom with a heavy heart. He could not understand how Raymond could have spent so much money, though he knew that his friend was very free in the use of money when he had it.

Jerry heard little of the examination: his thoughts were on the money and on Raymond's difficulty. He watched Raymond's face, and thought that part of the gloom had passed away. Then he asked himself if it might not be that the boys outside had told a larger story than was true.

"Did you send to Tom?" was Raymond's first question as he and Jerry met after the examination was over.

"Yes," was the answer, "and I guess it'll be all

right. I'll go down when the train comes in, and meet Tom. I believe he'll bring it."

"I knew you would help me," spoke Raymond, gratefully. "I have learned a lesson."

At the close of the morning session Raymond said that he would walk around with Jerry, and not go to dinner; he had no appetite, and would rather wait to see Tom than do anything else. He did not say that he had intended taking Jerry with him to dinner, but did not wish to meet the scholars lest they might say something in Jerry's presence about the money.

Tom came on the train, and as he stepped off he shouted to the two waiting for him,

"Hurrah for me! I got it, Raymond! But what's the matter? Haven't said they'd lock you up if you didn't pass examinations unless you could pay twenty-five dollars to get off, have they?"

"Did you get the whole amount?" asked Raymond, interrupting. "Did you bring twenty-five dollars?"

"Yes, sir; the whole of them. Might have got you twice that much if you had said so. I tell you, it made me feel large to get a telegraph-message asking me to raise a sum of money and hurry right off with it. But I'm a capitalist, and can raise money at a moment's notice. Am glad that I had some money on hand and had to ask father for only ten dollars."

"Did you tell him what you wanted it for?" asked Raymond, anxiously.

"Certainly," replied Tom; "I told him I wanted it to use. Do you suppose I'd have told him I wanted to throw it away?"

"Well, Tom, it shall not be thrown away; you'll get it all back, with interest, before long. You don't know how you have helped me. Now I want to ask you fellows to keep this still; I don't want to let everybody know my business. I somehow have used more money than I thought, and had to have this to make up before school closed."

Before the noon-hour ended Raymond had settled up with the treasury of the society, and had persuaded the members who had loaned him money to wait for a short time and he would settle with them too. Learning that he had paid back into the treasury of the society the missing money, these were the more willing to trust him, and Raymond was back to his old position in the good-will of the members of the school. The face of the young man wore its old look of quiet happiness, and Jerry, was delighted to think that he had lifted the load from his companion.

Raymond introduced Jerry and Tom as his friends and old schoolmates who would likely be at the academy in a year or two, and the two boys were strangers in the school no longer.

"I suppose that you will let green fellows come here without giving them a thrashing to initiate them?" suggested Tom to a new acquaintance.

"We don't fight that way," replied one of the

most sober of the older pupils; "we do battle with our heads."

"I guess you'd get the best of me that way," responded Tom, "for I am not used to butting. It must be rather a hard way of fighting."

"I guess he don't know much," spoke the one who had replied to Tom.

Though the words were spoken in an undertone, Tom caught them and said,

"That's so, but I came here to-day to see if I could learn something."

"Some folks cannot learn even if they try," responded the sober student.

"Is that so? I am sorry for you," said Tom, giving the young man a pitying look. "I hope it won't be so with me when I come here."

Raymond was glad to hear the bell ringing, as he feared that Tom would be misunderstood and would win the ill-will of others than the young man. Some were already laughing at Tom's remarks, little thinking that he had seen the conceit in the young man who had once or twice taken pains to say unkind things of Raymond's two friends.

"If you do come here, it will be to serve in the kitchen or attend to the pigs," said the young man, angrily.

"That may be," spoke Tom, in a pleasant tone, "but it will not be the first time I have fed swine."

"I should say that you had lived with them," said the young man, with a sneer.

"Not exactly," answered Tom, "though I do usually speak to them when I meet them if they are not too angry and don't talk back."

"Never mind now, Tom," said Raymond, taking Tom's arm and leading him toward the schoolroom. "Don't say anything more now."

"I'm sorry I said anything," spoke Tom, in a low tone; "but that fellow seemed to think that Jerry and I were meant to be poked fun at, and I wanted to show him that he isn't so smart as he thinks himself. I wish I could keep from hitting back when fellows hit me; I'm always ashamed of myself afterward."

The three boys found seats where Tom and Jerry, with all interest in the exercises, watched to see how it would be when they became academy-boys. They waited anxiously to hear Raymond's name called, and were delighted to see how calmly their friend stepped forward and took his place on the platform to speak. Not less pleased were they to hear some boys say in a loud whisper,

"Now you'll hear a fellow speak who knows how to do it and will have something worth listening to. Leigh means business when he does anything."

Raymond had been a good speaker at Metona, but showed himself even a better one here. None applauded more heartily than did Jerry and Tom, though the clapping of hands by girls as well as by boys proved that the speaker was popular throughout the school.

"Give me Metona yet," said Tom as Raymond took his seat; "it can beat the world for some things, I tell you."

"I wish your father and mother could have heard you speak to-day," said Jerry at the close of the exercises. "It is too bad that your father had to go away, and that your mother is not well. How they would have liked to have heard you! You did first rate. I wonder if I will ever do half as well when I speak?"

"Better, Jerry, if you try hard," replied Raymond. "But you fellows must not say much about my speaking, or it will seem like flattery, and it may tempt me to change my plans."

"What plans, Raymond?" asked Tom.

"Give up going into business and become a lawyer, or something, instead. The principal told me some time ago that I should become a public speaker, but I want to do something else."

"Good-byes" were soon said, and the three friends were about starting for the train, happy as boys or young men could be, when Tom saw the young man to whom he had spoken before the afternoon exercises. Going up to him, Tom said,

"Say! you must excuse me for saying what was not just the thing to you this afternoon. I didn't mean any harm; I am sorry, and want to take it all back."

"That makes no difference," was the reply; "I guess you didn't know any better."

Though Tom made no answer and walked away with Raymond and Jerry, no one but himself knew how much he wished to make a sharp reply to the stupid young man.

"Say, Jerry! don't tell my father or mother anything about money-matters, if you please," spoke Raymond, when they had separated from Tom after leaving the train at Metona. "And don't say anything about your not having dinner, either. I am sorry that I made you almost starve yourself; I was so anxious about the money that I forgot to treat you decently. You must pardon me. I hope it will never occur again."

"I was sorry to see you looking so," answered Jerry, "and was ready to do anything to help you out. It don't matter about my not getting dinner; I used often to go hungry much longer. It is like old times, and helps me to think how much better off I am now than I used to be; and I owe it all to you."

"Never mind about that, Jerry; you have more than paid me for all the little I did for you. Besides, I saw that you were one of the kind to help. Some day you help another fellow worthy your kindness, and you will doubly repay what I did."

During vacation Raymond received letters from two or three of his creditors among his schoolmates, asking him to forward the money he had promised to repay soon after the term closed. Not having

the money to make his promise good, Raymond was obliged to ask Jerry to help him.

"I will let you have all I have got," said Jerry, "but that is not much. How much do you need?"

"Fifty dollars," replied Raymond, after a little hesitation.

"Fifty dollars yet!" spoke Jerry, in surprise. "I didn't think it was as much as that: Tom and I let you have thirty dollars when school closed. Don't think hard of me, Raymond, for asking—maybe it is none of my business—but how did you get so much in debt? Hasn't somebody cheated you? Are you sure that you owe so much?"

"Yes, it is fully that amount," was the answer. "I hardly know how it came about, but I know that those are honest debts."

"Well, then, why don't you tell your father? He will help you pay. You can have all I've got, but that will not be more'n fifteen dollars. I've used up some of my wages, and have no more coming, though maybe your father might be willing to advance me a month's wages, and you would be welcome to that too. But that would only help you one half."

"See here, Jerry! I don't want my father to know anything about this at all. He will blame me, and perhaps stop my allowance. I don't dare to tell him; that's all there is about it."

Seeing that Jerry was far from satisfied, Raymond moved closer to his friend and in lower voice said,

"Jerry, I can trust you. You will keep a secret; so I will tell you the whole story, though no one else knows it. I have lost money, and had to borrow to repay. That is why I am in debt."

"How did you come to lose so much money at one time?"

"It was not at one time, Jerry, and I think you don't understand about the losing. I must tell you the whole story: I bought stock, and lost."

"'Bought stock'? What in the world do you want with stock? Where did you keep it? How many did you buy? Were they cows, calves, or what?"

"Not that kind of stock, Jerry, but oil stock. I bought shares in oil property—that is, oil wells—and the stock went down; so I lost all I put in."

After a considerable amount of questioning and answering, Jerry learned that his friend had been persuaded by a man living in Morestown to invest in oil stock. This man told great stories of fortunes made in a few months by oil speculations, and urged Raymond to invest all the money he had. Raymond did invest and gained some money by speculation, then became anxious to buy more stock. The man told him that the stock was sure to rise soon and that great profits would result. Believing the assertions of this pretended friend, Raymond not only invested all his pocket-money, but drew from the savings-bank the money he had deposited there.

As the man offered to sell shares on a margin—or to hold them as Raymond's on condition that he pay only a few dollars down for each share—the young man purchased a considerable amount. The offers of the man, added to the small gains from the stock bought, induced Raymond to draw every dollar from the savings-bank and invest all in oil stock. Soon after all his money was invested Raymond was surprised to learn that the stock, instead of rising, had fallen, and that to hold it he must advance more money or lose all invested. He borrowed from his friends all he could, persuaded that the stock would rise soon and that he would be able to repay all; but the stock did not rise. Slowly it went down, and more money must be paid. Where should he get it? was a question Raymond could not answer. He dared not ask his father for money lest the fact of the investment of his savings-bank deposit be known, nor did he dare ask Jerry; but he did borrow from his school-friends, and later took the five dollars from Jerry's pocket. Yet even that money did not meet the demands of the dealer in stocks. He urged that unless Raymond could pay the money soon the stocks should be no longer counted as his, and that then all his money would be lost. Assured that a change must come soon and the oil stocks rise, Raymond used the money of the society, feeling certain that he would be able to repay all before the close of the term. Only for a short time did the money thus borrowed last; then the man told him

that more must be paid, since the stocks were going down yet, though a change must soon come. He urged Raymond to do all in his power to get more money, and became angry when told that Raymond had determined to pay out not another cent, even though every dollar invested should be lost by such refusal.

"Then you deserve to lose," replied the man. "You have neither the courage nor the perseverance to win in this way. None but the bold and the determined make fortunes in this line, and you are neither. You have lost the best chance of your life at making a fortune. You can't expect to win without losing now and then. If you stop because at the start you lose a little, you are the very one to stop; you would never succeed."

Not until a day or two before the close of school had Raymond been forced to give up all hope of ever getting back the amount he had paid to the speculator, and then it was too late to get the money to pay his debts, nor was the young man able to think of any way, except as has already been told —of raising money for paying what he had taken from the treasury.

When Jerry had learned the whole story, he said,

"Well, that's a lesson to me not to try to get rich too fast. I guess you've learned it so well that no one need ask you any questions. But I'll tell you what I'd do if I were you; I would just tell my

father all about it. Then you would have no further trouble. He'd know it; so would your mother; and you wouldn't care much who else did, for you wouldn't be afraid that somebody would up and tell them."

"No, Jerry, no! I can't tell them, and don't want them to know. I have been a fool to trust that man and let him swindle me. Perhaps, though, the stocks will rise; then I'd feel sorry that I did not hold them. But no matter; I've lost the money, and must pay my debts. They are honest ones, and I must in some way get the money to pay back all I borrowed. I am not so sure about that stock business, only I believe the man I dealt with swindled me. He got my money, any way. I don't want to say anything to father and mother about losing money. What would they say were they to know that in a few months I have lost all my savings not only, but all they have given me since I was a child? No, no! Come what may, I can't tell them."

"Well, do as you think best, but I would. If you feel that it is a mean way to try to make money —and I don't see what there is that is right about it—that is all the more reason why you should be ready to own up to being wrong, and be ready to warn others against it. You say that you bought something, yet you didn't buy; you didn't have it at all. You just paid something to a man to let him say that you had it, and had to keep paying;

and when you got through, you had nothing and he had all your money, and all you'd bought besides. Had it gone the other way— But I guess the man wouldn't let it go that way; then he'd had to pay you. And what for? What would you have given him? Nothing. Is that honest?"

"You don't understand it, Jerry, but I don't feel like explaining. We will talk about that part another time. What is needed now is to know how to get the money to pay my debts. They must be paid, or I can't go back again to school. Whether or not I go back is a matter of little importance compared to paying just debts. Can you help me out? Do you think Tom can help?

"I am willing to do all I can. I can let you have fifteen dollars; and if your father is willing to advance me my wages for a month, I can give you ten more; but that is all I can raise. Twenty-five dollars will be only half. Maybe Tom can raise the rest, but he will ask what it is for and will want to know. With all his nonsense, Tom don't go to work without knowing what he is about. Will you tell him?"

After thinking a moment Raymond answered,

"How would it do for you to tell him, Jerry? I don't want to say anything more about this than I am compelled to. I can trust you, and I believe I can trust Tom, but would not trust any one else with my story. Will you see Tom and tell him as little as possible, that you may get the money?"

Jerry spoke to Tom about the money, and was answered,

"Certainly! I will keep my word that I gave him as a capitalist. But see here, Jerry! what new debt is this? Raymond is running back rather fast. Are you and I to be his capitalists, earning money for him to spend on we don't know what and can't tell where? I am ready to lend him twenty-five dollars, but want assurance that it is to go for some good cause. You see, Raymond is a first-rate fellow, but this looks a little bit suspicious. His father gives him a liberal allowance each month, and yet here within two months he wants eighty dollars or more besides. I suppose that it's all right, but don't know it; and a capitalist should be particular and know what he is doing. I don't want to be inquisitive, but what do you think about it?"

"If I had enough money, I would lend all to Raymond," was Jerry's reply; "because I have not all he wants, I come to you, his next-best friend."

"Putting me down as Number Two, hey? Mean me to play second-fiddle, do you, Jerry? Well, I'll try to keep tune with you, if you know the tune yourself. But you must not expect me to follow with you if you don't know whether the tune is to end as 'Yankee Doodle' or 'Old Hundred,' or in something ten times more solemn."

"Tom, I don't mean you to play second-fiddle;

but if any fellow has reason to help Raymond, I'm that fellow. Had it not been for him, I don't know what would have become of Jerry Thompson. I will stand by Raymond Leigh as long as there is anything left of him to stand by. He hasn't done just right, I guess, in this; but I want to help him out and give him a new start. I guess I can let you know, but you must keep it secret."

In as few words as possible Jerry told of Raymond's loss, and made his course seem as little as possible blameworthy; and then Tom had his say:

"I didn't think that of Raymond Leigh. He is so sensible and so fair that I hardly could believe such a story of him if not given on the best authority. That fellow who got his money must be a cheat. Call that dealing in stock? I guess it is something like stock-dealing, only there seems to be a bull on one side and a calf on the other. The bull just takes all the calf has got, and then chases him out of the lot glad enough to get away with a whole hide. Yes, I am sorry for Raymond. He has paid a big price for the lesson, and it is very kind of him to let us have it for nothing. It is but fair that we lend him the money to pay for his lesson, since he gives us the advantage of it. You won't catch him learning that lesson again, I'll warrant. How shall I get the money—twenty-five dollars—do you think? No matter; I'll get it honestly, and not by dealing in oil, either. I'll have the money inside of two days. Tell Ray-

mond so, but tell him that I am used to have my friends ask for favors *themselves*. If he needs an introduction, I will call with the money to-morrow night, and then you may introduce me as Thomas Wasson, Esq., the Money-bag Capitalist. Spell 'money' and 'capitalist' with capital letters at that, or begin them with capitals."

Tom was true to his promise and called with the twenty-five dollars; then the three had a long talk regarding the money, Raymond telling Tom the story much as he had told it first to Jerry.

Raymond paid the money, and so canceled all his debts except to Jerry and Tom. In time he paid them every dollar, with interest.

Lest this story become too long, two incidents in Raymond's history are given before passing on to the history of his manhood.

With the autumn term Raymond was at Morestown Academy and a favorite again among the pupils. At the close of the school-year he was among the graduates and was chosen to give the valedictory address. Not only were Mr. and Mrs. Leigh present, but Jerry, Tom and several other of the Metona boys were there to witness the success and honor of their old schoolmate. The room was crowded at the closing exercises, and the enthusiasm was great as the graduating class gathered on the platform. Applause greeted each speaker and reader of an essay. When Raymond arose to make the closing address, the applause given showed

that he was the most popular of all the graduates. His was a beautiful and eloquent address, and was delivered with a gracefulness that made it all the more acceptable.

When the valedictory closed, many were in tears; but a couple of young men—boys, rather—sitting not far from Tom, Jerry and other of the Metona boys, whispered that Leigh had "done it again using parts of two or three noted speeches." Tom, indignant at such a charge against his friend, turned to the two at the close of the exercises and demanded their authority for such a statement.

"You can have it," was the reply. "Here are the addresses in an old *Speaker* that Leigh took from the library. Look at them for yourself, and see. It is not the first time he has done that kind of work, but we have never been able to prove it until now. It is lucky for him that he graduates to-day. We have always insisted that Leigh is a swindler and ready to use anything he can lay hands on if he wants it. We are not down on him because he has opposed some of our plans, nor anything like that, but because we know that he can't be trusted. The rest never would believe us; they will now, when we furnish proof of our assertions. They always said that we were jealous of his popularity."

Tom declined to look at the book handed him, but replied,

"I have known Raymond Leigh since he was a small boy, and I know him through and through.

He is not a swindler nor anything of the kind; he is as true and honest a fellow as can be found. He will do anything for those in need. I don't believe that he has copied that, or any other address; he may have read, and without knowing—or, at least, without intending it—may have used some of the words and ideas; but it is not in Raymond Leigh to steal a speech or anything else. The one who says that he swindles and cheats either does not know him or wishes to injure him by falsehood."

"Do you mean to say that we lie?" asked one of the youths.

"I have said what I believe," answered Tom, "and there is no need to repeat. You may take any meaning from it you like."

"If you call me a liar, you will have to take it back, or take something else instead," replied the youth, angrily.

"I don't take back anything I have just said," spoke Tom, decidedly. "If you don't care to remember my remarks, perhaps you had better forget them. I know Raymond Leigh better than you do, and know him to be a fellow who has friends who will stand by his reputation in his absence. I am one of those friends."

"Perhaps you are like him," was sneeringly replied.

"If I were as fine a fellow as he, I would be proud of it," responded Tom, "but I am not; so I am content to be his friend, and not his enemy."

"Do you mean to say that we are his enemies?" asked one of the angry boys.

"You?" replied, Tom, with a look of assumed surprise. "I don't know you. Who are you, any way? I was speaking of myself and Raymond Leigh."

"Come, Tom, let us go away," said Nick Griffin, taking Tom by the arm. "Let's give Raymond a grip for his speech."

As the Metona boys were leaving, one of the boys who had discovered Raymond's address in the book spoke loud enough to be heard by Tom:

"They are part of that Metona set."

"Yes," answered Tom, "we are regular sitters. We not only stand, but sit, by a friend as long as there is enough of him left to see where he is."

"Don't say anything more, Tom," whispered Jerry. "We don't want to get in trouble here; it will only make trouble for Raymond."

The young valedictorian was not more proud of his speech than were his friends of him. While the boys praised him, they said nothing of the charge made by the two young critics. Perhaps Raymond would gladly have removed from the minds of his friends any suspicion as to his honesty, yet he could not easily have done it had Tom looked into the book. Raymond *had* copied parts of his address, with very little change, directly from the *Speaker*. He did not intend to deceive, but, seeing there exactly what he wished to say, and put in

much better language and form than he could express it, he had copied, just as at other times he had used, without intending to steal, what belonged to others, and without permission.

During the summer following his graduation, Raymond, as in earlier days, was enjoying a swim with the boys one hot afternoon. There had been a strong south wind, with great heat, and there were indications of rain. While the boys were yet in the water a cloud that had been gathering in the west, and unnoticed by the swimmers, crept along the sky until the sun was hidden. Warned by the approach of the shower, the boys left the water and prepared for home. While dressing they noticed a yacht coming before the wind with full sail set and sheet out, rushing swiftly along, as if regardless of danger.

"There's coming a change of wind," said Jerry, "and that yacht had better shorten sail and haul in her sheet or she will have more wind than she will know what to do with. See! she has women and children on board too."

The boys watched eagerly as the vessel approached not far from the edge of the channel, on the west shore, to see what the sailors would do and how the yacht would meet the change of the wind that could already be seen coming along the water not far north.

"The men don't know how to manage her," spoke Bennie Turck. "If the west wind that is coming

strikes her jib while her main sheet is out so far, it will keep her from heading up against the wind, and she will go over. Why don't they haul in the sheets? The wind is coming like lightning toward them."

"Why don't they take down the sail?" said John Swart.

"Boys, those men don't know what danger is near," responded Will Oster. "That yacht can't stand the wind coming down on her if she keeps all that sail up."

"She can't take in her sail running before the wind while it is blowing so. Those men ought to know better than to carry so much sail when the wind is blowing like this," added Bennie.

"There it comes! Now look out!" shouted Jerry, in alarm. "The west wind will catch her with sheet out; then you will see a yacht go over. Boys, we must be ready to help them; they don't know what they are about. There's something wrong there."

"Her jib catches it," shouted Tom, "and she can't come up into the wind. See, fellows! She is going over, just as sure as can be!"

Almost breathless, the boys watched the men on the vessel in their frantic effort to pull in the sheet, and then to turn the yacht against the wind. With terrific force the squall of west wind struck the vessel. Nobly the yacht struggled to keep from going over, but in vain. Slowly she yielded to the

force of the squall, and leaned more and more over on her side. Her sail struck the water, and seemed to aid in pulling the vessel over. It seemed more minutes perhaps than it was seconds as the boys watched the vessel yield to the storm. For moments they were stupefied and unable to do more than look and listen as the shrieks of the women and the screams of the children, added to the shouts of the men, came to them above the roar of the wind. But there was too much courage in those boys to allow them to sit calmly upon the shore when men, women and children were drowning before their eyes.

Raymond was first to speak.

"Boys, we must save them!" shouted he. "Who will go with me to help? There is the big boat; she is the only one to carry such a load, and the only one to take out in the storm."

Hardly had Raymond spoken when Tom, Bennie, Nick, Jerry, Will and all the others were rushing for the oars or getting ready to go in the boat. Not waiting to push off another to bring the anchored boat to the shore, Jerry and Tom, throwing off all the clothing they could as they ran, plunged into the water for the boat, and soon had it on shore.

"Raymond, you tell us what to do," said Will, "and who shall go, for we can't all go in the boat. Be captain, and we will obey."

"I want Jerry, Tom, Bennie, Nick and Will," replied Raymond; "the rest of you stay here and

be ready to help.—Nick, you steer; the other four each take an oar and pull steadily, but with all your might, while I stand in the bow to tell what to do. We'll try to save them if any one can; won't we, boys?"

The look on the boys' faces was the best answer as each did his utmost to hurry the boat to the capsized yacht. The distance was short, and with the aid of the wind the boat was soon close to the larger vessel.

"Run around to the other side, Nick," shouted Raymond, "to be a little out of the wind."

"That is what I mean to do," was the response.

"Keep courage!" shouted Raymond to the men and women who had succeeded in climbing up on the side of the half-sunken yacht. "We will take you all ashore."

"Oh, my Jennie! my Jennie!" cried one of the women. "She is drowned! She is drowned! Can you save her? Will you?"

"Where is she?" asked Raymond.

"I don't know! Oh, I don't know where she is! She will be lost! She will be lost! Oh, can't you do something to save her?"

Holding the boat to the larger vessel with one hand and grasping a small boy on the yacht with the other, Raymond tried to pull him off as he said,

"Here, Tom! pass this little fellow along to the stern.—Jerry, hold her fast while I try to get the others."

"Won't you save my Jennie?" begged one of the women, piteously. "Oh, do something! She is drowning!"

"Yes, yes!" answered Raymond. "I thought we would get the children in first, and then you ladies; and the men last, as they can hold on best."

"We can all hold on a few minutes if you will only save her," answered one of the men, who had waited to speak. "She is not here; she is in the cabin. She is drowning there. Can you do anything to save her?"

"Tom, Jerry, there's one in the cabin; she's drowning. Hold the boat; I'll dive in and try to save her," shouted Raymond. "If I die, it is to save another."

"Not you, Raymond," shouted Jerry as he rushed to reach the bow; "let me go. If you drown, you are lost; I am a Christian, and it will be all right with me. Let me go."

Before Jerry could pass, Raymond had already plunged into the cabin; and the boys waited, ready to do something for his rescue should he not speedily come back. The moments seemed hours; then Raymond came out of the cabin, but alone.

"Oh, is she lost! Must my Jennie drown?" cried the frantic mother. "Won't some one try again to save her? Please do! We will wait here; we are safe yet."

Only waiting to get breath, Raymond, seeing that Jerry was about entering the cabin, plunged in again.

"Wait, Jerry," said he; "let me try once more. If I fail, you try."

It did not seem as long this time before Raymond appeared, but not alone. Almost exhausted, he had in his grasp a young girl.

"It is Jennie! It is Jennie! My child! my child! Jennie, speak to me. Are you alive? Oh, she can't be dead! You must not let her die! Can you, will you, save her?" begged the mother. "Do anything, everything; only save my child!"

"Is this all?" asked Tom, who saw that Raymond was too exhausted to take command.

"Yes," replied one of the men; "Jennie is the only one who was not on deck."

"Then hurry along to the boat," shouted Tom, "for we must get ashore with this girl, to save her, if it is possible."

The men seemed more able to move and help the others, now that the young girl had been recovered. Whether she was still alive or had been drowned was uncertain; she seemed entirely lifeless as Raymond struggled to bring her to the boat. Quickly the other boys helped, and soon not only the rescued girl, but Raymond himself, found a place of safety. He was too much exhausted to do more for the time, and the others, holding the boat to the yacht while the wind and waves dashed the two together and again forced them apart were doing their utmost to bring the remaining passengers from the half-sunken vessel. One by one the children, then the women,

and last of all the two men, were safely transferred. Two small boys, one little girl, another girl of about fifteen years, the young lady rescued by Raymond, two ladies and the two men comprised the company taken from the yacht.

"Are these all there were on the sloop?" asked Tom.

"Yes, all except the two sailors," answered one of the men. "I have not seen either of them since the yacht went over; I fear both are drowned. They were drunk and asleep, and probably sank when she capsized."

"There's a man tangled in the ropes in the water by the mast," shouted Jerry. "He's alive; don't let's leave him to die. He isn't dead, I think; let's try to save him."

"We can't get to him," replied Nick, "and we must get ashore with this load."

"Yes, let's do what we can to save this girl," answered Raymond.

"Then you fellows pull ashore and come back for me," shouted Jerry. "The yacht won't sink, and I'll try to save that poor fellow. If he was drunk, he isn't fit to die!"

There was no time for deliberation, and Jerry, who had held the boat to the yacht, sprang upon the larger vessel, and at once the boys determined to do as the brave fellow ordered. They knew that Jerry was an excellent swimmer and was almost as much at home in the water as out of it, and, as the

shore was not far off, they hoped to take their passengers there and return to rescue their friend, if not the man for whom he was risking his life.

"Pull away, boys!" shouted Nick as the boat, driven by the wind, drifted clear of the yacht and her sail. "Push for the shore and save the life of this girl; I believe she is alive. If we can only get her on shore before it is too late! Pull with all your might.—Raymond, old boy, how are you feeling?"

"I'll soon be all right; I am only tired. I didn't swallow any water," answered Raymond. "I am glad that we saved them all. But do all you can, fellows, to get that man that Jerry's after. Jerry, noble fellow! would die to save a man."

The boys at the oars needed no urging to row with all their might. Though the wind was still blowing furiously and the rain was coming down in torrents, they pushed the strong boat swiftly against the gale, and were soon ashore. Meanwhile, the two men in the boat, with Raymond aiding, were doing what they could to bring back to life the unconscious and apparently lifeless girl.

Hurriedly the passengers were helped or urged ashore, the boys waiting there doing what they could to aid.

"Where's Jerry?" asked two or three at once as they missed the daring fellow from the boat's crew. "He isn't drowned, is he?"

"No," answered Nick, "but I am afraid he may be if we don't hurry back for him. Come! who will go back for him and that man?—Here, John, and some of the rest of you, come back with us. Let those who rowed and worked hard this time stay, and the rest of you go to get Jerry. He stayed to help one poor fellow whom we had no time to get."

"I'm going back for Jerry," replied Tom.

"So am I," said Will and Bennie.

"Hurry, boys, for the yacht is drifting farther and farther away and more and more out into the wind," urged Raymond. "I am feeling all right now, but think some one ought to stay and help. I'll stay; you fellows go. Don't let Jerry sacrifice himself by your waiting."

Ed Lasher, John Swart and James Relyea were soon at the oars pulling with Bennie, while Nick steered and Will stood beside him, and Tom stood up in the bow ready to grasp the yacht and do his part toward rescuing Jerry and the man in the water. As the rain was falling and the wind driving the spray from the caps of the waves, Jerry had soon been lost to the sight of those in the boat as well as those on the shore. Even the yacht could not be seen from the shore, but, knowing the direction, Nick had no difficulty in steering for the vessel, and a few moments' pulling brought the yacht in sight.

"There she is!" shouted Tom. "But I can't see Jerry. Pull, fellows! We can't lose him; he's the best fellow alive."

"No fear about Jerry," responded Bennie, "as long as the yacht keeps afloat. He can swim like a fish, and knows just what to do. You'll find him all right, and having that man somewhere ready to be taken on board when we get there."

It did not matter that the words of the boys, though shouted, were partly lost in the roar of the wind and the rush of the waves. Each boy was ready to do his part.

The yacht had partly turned, and lay with her bow to the wind; so it was easier to bring the boat up to the stern and partly out of the wind and waves. As she rounded-to and ran up to the stern of the larger vessel the boat was fastened by Tom, who seemed to have one eye at his work and the other searching for Jerry.

"There he is, fellows!" shouted Tom.—"Hurrah, Jerry, old boy! You are safe! We shall have you with us soon again. Hold on, old fellow!"

"Bring a knife, some one," shouted Jerry, in return. "He is alive yet, and we will save him; but he is tangled in the ropes, and I can't get him loose without cutting."

With one hand clinging to the mast and with the other holding the man to the same support, Jerry was patiently waiting for help.

"How can we get a knife to you?" asked John.

"Here! I'll show you," replied Tom as he threw off his few articles of clothing.

"Don't do that, Tom," shouted Bennie, "or you'll

get tangled in some rope. You are barefoot; run along the side of the sloop until you reach the mast, and crawl down to that and go out on that to help Jerry. You can do a great deal more that way than by swimming to them."

"I'll go with you," said Will.

"No; stay where you are, and I'll go," spoke Bennie as he threw his shoes and coat down on the seat after taking them off. "I am right here."

Tom was already running along the side of the yacht and scrambling down to find the mast, that, by the deck, was under water. It was an unsteady foothold that he found, but he reached Jerry safely, to be followed by Bennie. The three boys succeeded in releasing the man from the ropes, but the poor fellow was too much exhausted to do anything toward rescuing himself.

"You fellows will have to help me get him to the deck, and so to the boat," said Jerry, "for he can't help himself at all. He was about gone when I reached him, and I have since kept his head out of the water; but that was all I could do."

"Here! put this rope under his arms," spoke Bennie, "and we'll keep him from sinking while you try to move him along the mast to the sloop. We can't take him out of the water here, and I guess we'll have to get him over the mast somehow, and then move him along through the water to the stern. We can't keep him on the slippery side of the sloop after we get him up."

It was a strange way of moving the man, but it proved successful; and the two boys out of the water did most of the work, while Jerry merely kept one arm about the half-drowned man. After some mishaps the boys succeeded in getting the poor fellow into the boat alive, but so exhausted that he was unable to speak.

"There was another man," spoke Tom. "Where can he be? Is he tangled up in the rigging, under the sail, or has he gone to the bottom? Have you boys seen anything of him?"

None had seen the other man, and after rowing about the yacht and looking carefully to see if he might not be yet alive the boys turned their boat toward the shore.

"Maybe he is in the cabin," said John.

"No; the men said that both were asleep on deck before the yacht went over," replied Nick.

"Did they say they were on deck, or only that they were drunk and asleep?" asked Will.

"They wouldn't be asleep in the cabin of such a yacht," answered Nick, "while a girl was there; I know that. But one of the men ashore told me that both were on deck when she went over. I don't see how it is possible for the other fellow to be alive so long after the yacht went over if he is under water all this time. We must go ashore and wait until the storm is over to look for him."

By this time the wind had gone down considerably, though the rain was falling as fast as ever.

When the boys reached the land, they found that the others from the yacht had gone, under Raymond's care, to the house of Mr. Leigh.

"But how about that girl that was almost drowned? Was she alive?" asked Will.

"Yes," was the answer. "They stayed here until she opened her eyes and showed that she was getting better, and then her mother said they must take her out of the rain. I guess she was as wet as she could be, any way, and the rain would not hurt her, but that woman was so excited that she didn't know what she was doing half the time."

"I guess you'd be excited too if you had gone through with what she has," replied Jerry. "I tell you, fellows, I don't want to go through another such time. Yet I'm glad that we were here to help; if we hadn't been, they all might have drowned."

"See here, fellows! this man must not be left here," spoke Tom. "He is not strong enough to walk, and we must help him to some house. Where shall we take him?"

"To the nearest house," answered Bennie, "and that is ours. Let us take him there."

Taken to Mr. Turck's, the man slowly recovered, and the next day seemed about well. But it was not so with the young lady. She and the rest of the party had been taken to Mr. Leigh's home and made as comfortable as possible there. Though she had become conscious before she was taken from the shore, her recovery was not rapid. For days she

remained ill at the home of the Leighs. Within a week she was able to walk, but the time was longer before she was able to leave Raymond's home.

To the surprise of both, Mr. Harcourt, her father, and Mr. Leigh recognized each in the other an old school-friend. They had not met and had hardly heard of each other for some years, but the meeting was a welcome one, and Mr. Harcourt, his wife, daughter and two boys were made at home during their stay at Metona, while Mr. Burton, the other gentleman of the party, with his wife and two daughters, found a comfortable shelter until the next day in the hospitable home of Mr. Leigh.

Mr. Burton was the president and Mr. Harcourt the cashier of a bank in the city, and the two were spending part of the summer together at the summer home of Mr. Burton, on the bank of the river, some distance farther down than Metona. On the afternoon of the catastrophe the two families had started in the yacht of a neighbor for a visit up the river. Neither of the men was accustomed to sailing a yacht, and they trusted to the two sailors employed to care for and sail the vessel. These men, supposing that the owner would not use the yacht that day, had taken some liquor aboard, and when ordered to prepare for a sail were already slightly under the influence of strong drink.

The rescued people found themselves unable to thank enough the brave boys who had done the work so nobly. Mrs. Harcourt, in the joy of see-

ing that her daughter was saved and was recovering, spoke to Raymond:

"Young man, you have saved our child; we shall never forget you. But tell us what reward we must give to show that we are willing to pay for what you have done, and you shall have it."

For a moment Raymond looked at her as if to study the woman, and then answered,

"Life is too precious to me to risk it for money, yet I would willingly risk it again to save another stranger, but never to gain a reward other than to save the life of the drowning."

"Perhaps we can find a better way to show how much we appreciate your heroic act, young man," said Mr. Harcourt. "But now let us complete the work so successfully begun."

This was said while the party was on the shore. After Mr. Leigh's home was reached, Mrs. Harcourt said nothing more of paying Raymond for what he had done, though she insisted that the other boys should be offered money for their efforts.

Before Mr. Harcourt left the home of the Leighs he learned of Raymond's ambition to make money and become a rich man, and asked how he would like a place in the bank.

CHAPTER X.

BREAKING AT THE WEAK PLACE.

SINCE this story has grown so long, we will take leave of some old friends, and will look more rapidly at events in the lives of others. John Swart and James Relyea became farmers; Will Oster, a doctor; others became mechanics or followed other lines of business; while Tom Wasson, Bennie Turck and Nick Griffin became gospel ministers. That boys of their pluck and spirit should be successful may easily be guessed, but we have no time to tell their successes, except to speak of Tom, as his work associated him with the two to whom the remainder of this story is given.

Before Mr. Harcourt left the home of the Leighs he determined to get Raymond a position in the bank of which he himself was cashier. As one of the clerks left unexpectedly, Mr. Harcourt, after consulting with Mr. Burton, at once offered Raymond the vacant position, and instead of going to college the young man accepted the offer and entered the bank.

Raymond Leigh was now in business and earning money. His salary was, for a young man, good,

and he felt proud of his position, yet not vain in it. He was glad to be able to pay what remained of his debts to Jerry and Tom, and his first spare money was used for paying both to the last cent, and even interest at the legal rate. He insisted that interest should be paid, since it was strictly a business transaction.

"Now," said he after the money was paid—for he came home purposely to cancel the debts—"I am ready to lend to each of you when you are in need. You fellows did me a favor that I shall never forget; and if ever an opportunity comes for me to help you, don't fear to ask. No matter how much money you need, if able I will lend you all you ask for."

"Wouldn't it be as well to tell your father and mother about that money?" suggested Jerry to Raymond, when the two were alone.

"Not yet, Jerry; wait until I have replaced in the savings-bank that which I used, and have added a good sum to the amount."

Jerry remained at Mr. Leigh's, working during vacation and night and morning, while he attended school during term-time. At the end of a year, when Tom, Nick, Bennie and several other boys started for Moreston Academy, Jerry went too. He had laid up what he regarded as a considerable sum of money, and determined to invest it in a good education. He returned to Metona on Fridays and made his home at Mr. Leigh's house.

Indeed, that had become home to Jerry more than ever since Raymond left.

Raymond had accepted Mr. Harcourt's invitation to board at his home in the city and become one of the family, and in some way the boys of Metona learned that Raymond found the home in the city quite as attractive as the country home. Perhaps they noticed that Raymond was very attentive to Miss Harcourt, whom he had rescued from drowning, when, the next summer after the accident, the Harcourts made a visit at the home of Mr. Leigh.

At the end of his second year in the academy Jerry was delighted to find himself fitted for college and admitted to the Freshman class with Tom and Bennie, Nick and the other boys deciding to wait a year or more before entering college. Jerry wrote a long letter to his old friend, and was glad to receive as long a reply from Raymond, saying that he meant to spend the whole of his vacation at home, when the two could have all the time they wished in which to talk of the past and the future. Raymond added that his own prospects were brightening, and that he had something special to tell Jerry. The "something" was not difficult to guess. Raymond had already been promoted, and was receiving a larger salary; he was trusted and honored in the bank. All this Jerry knew, and he guessed that the "something special" related to somebody else besides his friend.

In due time the two young men were enjoying their vacation together, visiting old resorts, rowing, swimming and fishing together as they had done in former times, and talking together as confidentially as ever. Then was told the news that Raymond was engaged to be married to Miss Harcourt, though the wedding would not take place for some time to come.

"Say, Jerry!" said Raymond one day; "what's the use of going through college before you begin to study law? I doubt if I would be any better fitted for business by a college course, and I do not believe that it will pay you to take four years more of preparation."

"I want to be the best kind of lawyer," was Jerry's answer, "and mean to take a full course. I have no doubt that good lawyers—and many of them—never went through college; but I want to be a better one. After I get into the profession I can't come back to add to my preparation, so mean to get it, or as much as I can, while I am on the way. My determination is to do the best I can in everything. The fact is, Raymond, I hear so much said about lawyers that I have made up my mind it is my duty to redeem, as far as lies in me, the character of the profession I have chosen."

"But see how long the course will take!" urged Raymond.

"So it takes long for a child to grow up to manhood; but if the time be well spent, it pays *in a*

good man. One good man has a great deal of power for right, and that is what I want to have."

"But how will you get the money to pay your way? Excuse me, Jerry, for asking, but it will cost more money than you suppose. What you have saved will soon run out."

"It has almost run out already," responded Jerry, quietly. "It would not have been enough, by a great deal, for the two years at the academy had it not been for your own generosity in supplying me with clothing, and your mother's kind help in mending and fixing up nicely, and the presents your father gave me of two suits of clothing during the two years. I shall never forget what you all have done. Some day, if any of you should need help, I hope to be ready to give you all there may be needed."

"Well, Jerry, you know that we gave it because we knew you to be worthy. But how are you going to get through college and the law-school?" asked Raymond.

"I mean to earn the money," was the answer.

"Yes, and be an old man when you get through," spoke Raymond. "Now, see here, Jerry! You are usually long-headed: did it ever occur to you that you had better borrow money, and pay it afterward, than to earn it first. You may possibly earn a few hundred dollars a year now, but, as a lawyer, you might earn almost as many thousands. Now, would it not be wisdom to borrow what you need

on interest, and pay back as soon as you earn it in your profession?"

"Where can I borrow?" asked Jerry. "Who would lend? I can give no security. If I should die meanwhile, what would my creditor receive for trusting me? No, Raymond; that is impossible."

"Well, Jerry, it does seem an uncertain investment, but will you let a friend help you through? I am talking business, and am able and ready to help you right through until you are admitted to practice law. Will you let me do it? I am getting a good salary and have laid up a nice little sum already, so am well able to help you. Gladly will I do it if you will let me."

"Raymond, it is just like your generous heart to make such an offer, but I can't accept it. I don't wish to get my education without gaining it by my own efforts. You have been all that a brother could be to me, and I can never forget it, but can't let you carry me," said Jerry, with deep feeling.

"Now, let us look at this from a business point of view, old boy," spoke Raymond. "To earn your way and pass through the whole course you propose taking will require about, say, ten years. That is three or four more years than the regular time, and is losing three or four years of time—say three years at three thousand dollars a year, for I believe that you will earn more than that in the later years of your profession. That is nine thousand dollars —say ten thousand. It will not cost over three or

four hundred dollars at most each year to get ready to practice law; say two thousand five hundred dollars in all. Then to earn your way will cost you the difference between ten thousand and two thousand five hundred dollars, or seven thousand five hundred dollars. Will it pay?"

"I don't study law to make money, Raymond, but to do good and help others. By earning my education I shall keep my self-respect and feel independent. Besides, I shall not lose the time; I hope to be all the better for my work by the course I propose. By working in that way my acquaintance with human nature and the ways of the world will be helped as much as, and more than, by study."

"But you have a good share of knowledge of the ways of the world and of human nature already. I would like to see the client who would beat you —lawyer, I mean—at getting at the facts in the case. You have spent a good part of your life in that, and it is time that you get through the other school. At your proposed rate you will be nearly thirty before you begin to practice. If you wish to do good, you will lose much time before you get at it. I don't want to urge upon you anything that you are not willing to accept, but I tell you that I want to see you begin the practice of law, and begin in the city where I live, and make your home at my house. There, now, my boy! I tell you the whole story. Will you hurry through and do it?"

"I would like to, Raymond, but don't believe

that I am able to practice in the city. Yet that is a matter we can talk about later. I can't take help from you, for you will need your own money to help yourself by and by."

"Don't give yourself any fear about that. I shall have enough, for it is not my intention to start with a great deal of expense. And"—Raymond's voice lowered—"I want you near to me. I am tempted, and somehow you help keep temptation away. I shall rise—I know that—and you are a kind of good brother to keep me right. I want you near me, and soon. Now, this is my proposition: I will lend you the money for your education on condition that you pay back, with interest, when you have earned money by practicing law. Will you accept?"

"Give me time to think, Raymond. Yours is a generous offer—far more so than any man has a right to expect."

"Well, take time to think of it," replied Raymond; "only hurry through with your studies, that you may come and live with me. I know that another will be as glad to welcome you as I shall be; she often speaks of you and of your bravery in being willing to risk your life to save hers. I am glad that you didn't, old fellow, or— But no matter. Miss Burton told her what you said; of course she did not hear it. By the way, Miss Burton often speaks of you. She has grown to be a young lady now and often comes to Mr. Harcourt's, and I tell

you she is, with one exception, the pleasantest young lady I have ever met."

"I remember her," answered Jerry. "She was a fine-appearing girl, and so quiet and self-possessed as she clung to the yacht. She was the most calm of the whole company, and the only one who seemed to know what she was about. I remember her as if it were yesterday, holding on with both hands, her face as pale as the white sails, yet waiting to be told what to do and ready to obey. How different she appeared the next day when the blood came back to her cheeks, and her eyes sparkled, and she laughed as cheerfully as though she had never been in danger during her whole life! But pshaw! why do I want to talk or think of girls? I have other and more important business to attend to. Excuse me, Raymond, but is Miss Harcourt a Christian?"

"Really, Jerry, I don't know; we so seldom speak of such things that I have little idea about it. I hardly think she is, though she is regularly at church and Sunday-school."

"I hope she is one," was Jerry's comment. "I do wish that you were a Christian, Raymond; with your generous heart and liberal spirit, you would do a great deal of good. Will you think of it and become one soon? You are in business and prospering now."

"Not yet, Jerry. Of course I am trying to do right, and I am able to do good even though I am not as good as Tom and you are. But it is not that

which prompts me to wish to lend you money to finish your education: I want to see you in active life, and to see how well you succeed. I want you to accept my offer."

"I can't say what is best, but wish to think of it. You need not be told how much I appreciate your offer. Some day, Raymond, I will show, by helping others, what you have done for me. I hope there will never be occasion to help you."

Jerry accepted Raymond's offer, and before the vacation of either ended the bargain was made, Jerry agreeing to borrow from his friend enough money to pay his way through college and law-school, and to pay it all back, with legal interest, as soon as he had earned enough by his profession.

We pass over several years in the history of the two young men, and go to the city where Raymond is living. Mr. Burton is dead; Mr. Harcourt has been made president of the bank, and Raymond is cashier. Popular as during his boyhood at Metona, he soon won the confidence and the love not only of the employés of the bank, but of its directors. An excellent business-man, he was promoted over others who felt that if any but themselves were to be advanced they would choose Raymond Leigh. The directors declared that time enough had been given to prove not only Raymond's honesty, but his ability, and, though he was yet a young man, that was no proof that he was unfit for so responsible a position.

Raymond has been married several years to the daughter of Mr. Harcourt, and has taken his wife to their new home, where the two have been made happy by the coming of a son and a daughter.

"Wife, Jerry is coming to-morrow to spend Sunday with us," said Raymond, coming home from the bank one Friday evening. "We must give him a warm reception. Poor fellow! he has worked hard during this his last year at the law-school, and needs a little rest before examinations. I want him to spend several days, if he can be persuaded to remain. I think he is very much inclined to begin practicing law in the city here when he gets through; then, of course, he will make our home his. That was an agreement before he entered college. I mean to hold him to it, too."

"I shall do all I can to make him feel at home and welcome here, but really, Raymond, I don't see how we can give him a permanent home with us, on account of room," answered the wife. "I don't wish to give him poor rooms; he surely will want more than one, and I don't see how we can provide such as we would like him to have."

"Don't give yourself any trouble about that, Jennie, nor will you when you become better acquainted with Jerry; he doesn't care what he has, so long as it is comfortable. Some day we shall have a better house than this. I have about determined to build a new one on the lot I bought last year."

"But can you afford it yet, husband? Don't run

into debt. Remember what Mr. Burton did, and how he left his family. I was sorry to learn that they will be obliged to give up the beautiful house he built."

"Yes; it is too bad. I cannot understand how Mr. Burton came to lose his money, for he certainly had plenty years ago. I doubt now if his family will have anything besides the house, and that is heavily mortgaged. We don't understand it in the bank. Your father and I have talked about it, but cannot explain the matter."

"Would it not be better for us to try to get along with a home that is not all we wish until you are able to pay for another?" asked the wife.

"I don't mean to build just yet; but when Jerry repays me that money I loaned him, I shall have considerable to use for such a purpose, besides what I have already," answered Raymond.

"Do you mean to ask him for that?" asked Mrs. Leigh.

"'Ask him'! No need of asking Jerry. The very first dollar he has to spare from his first earnings at law-practice will be used toward paying that debt. He would not accept the money on any other terms than those of a business character. He will pay all back, with interest. I would gladly have given him the money out and out, but he would not have listened to such a proposition; I know him too well to insist on such a course. I never saw one like Jerry; he seems to have been born so. It is a

mystery to me how he can insist on paying back every dollar."

"Uncle Jerry is coming to-morrow, Willie," said Mrs. Leigh to her oldest child as the little fellow came into the room.

"Willie's untle Jerry? He tomin'? I so dlad! Willie's untle Jerry tate me out to see horsey and doats," spoke Willie.

Jerry came the next day, but his stay was short. He must go back to prepare for examinations, he said, and no persuasion could keep him longer than until Tuesday. But the two young men had long talks about Jerry's future, and it was settled that the young lawyer should open an office in the city as soon as able and board with Raymond.

"I mean to build a new and larger house this year," said Raymond, "and want you to help arrange for your own rooms. If you mean to live a bachelor, we must provide quarters for you."

A successful investment made Raymond sure that he would run no great risk if he built a house, and one suited to his future as well as to his present wants. The house was built and the family moved into it in due time, and Jerry, as happy as he had ever been, joyfully settled down in the comfortable rooms prepared for him. He opened his law-office and hopefully waited for business. At once he united with the church of which Mrs. Leigh was a member and Raymond a regular attendant, and became an active worker there.

But business did not come at once, nor much of it when it did come. The young lawyer might have waited long before earning enough at his profession to pay expenses had it not been for what Raymond called a good turn of fortune.

A boy had been arrested for stealing; his widowed mother went to a lawyer's office to gain his services. Jerry happened to be in the office at the time, and the lawyer, being very busy and judging from the woman's appearance that she was unable to pay much of a fee, if any, declined to take the case because of urgent business.

"Here is Mr. Thompson," spoke the lawyer; "perhaps he will take your case.—How is it, Thompson?"

Jerry invited the woman to his office, and learned that she was poor and unable to pay except what she earned by hard work.

"No matter about the pay," said Jerry; "if you are willing to trust me, I will do all I can to save your boy, if he be, as you say, innocent. But I will not try to save a thief from punishment."

Going with the mother to the prison where the boy was held for trial, Jerry, after close questioning, became convinced that the mother's story was true, and that her son was not only honest, but had become the victim of his courage. Having caught the thieves at work, he had told them that he meant to call the police, and started to do his duty. The boys at once ran after him shouting, "Stop thief! Stop thief!" and so had him arrested instead of

themselves. As there were three of them, his word was doubted and theirs taken; so the boy was shut up for trial.

Here was a case exactly suited to Jerry's taste, and he began to work it up. He found that Pat, the accused boy, had a good character, while the three accusers had a bad reputation. But he could get no witnesses to testify to the theft, nor yet to Pat's innocence. The place where the stealing had been done was on an unfrequented street where few houses stood.

The bad boys, learning before the trial that Pat had nothing but a "green young lawyer" to conduct his case, gave themselves little trouble about their testimony. They expected that it would be taken instead of Pat's, and that the smaller lad would be made to suffer for their crime.

"All you need do, Paddy," said the young lawyer, "is to ask God to help you and then just tell the truth. He says that he will take care of such as you, and he will. Try him. Don't try to clear yourself, but try to tell the exact truth, and let the truth clear you."

Before the witnesses against Pat were put on the stand, Jerry asked that all the boys who had declared that they saw Pat steal be taken from the room, that neither might hear what the others testified, and that they be brought in one at a time. This was granted, and so shrewd was the questioning of the young lawyer that before the three bad

boys had given in all their testimony those present began to look with sympathy upon the pale face of Pat.

When Jerry brought witnesses to testify for his young client, he proved that Pat had always been an honest, good boy whom everybody liked; he further proved that the other three had a bad reputation, and, as they had been unable to explain satisfactorily why they had been near the place of the theft, it began to look doubtful for the guilt of Pat. But when the lad himself was put on the stand, his honest face and simple story convinced all that he told the truth and was innocent.

The counsel for the prosecution asked only a question or two of the boy, and then the lawyers summed up the testimony.

"I need hardly plead for this boy," said Jerry; "his story is his best plea. His character sustains that story. His course in bravely trying to bring the real thieves to justice shows that he has the courage of an honest boy. You have heard the testimony, and why this lad was on that lonely street, and why the three others were there. He had been to Sunday-school and was on his way home, but where had they been? What were they there for? You heard their testimony; it proved that they had no business there, unless it was to accomplish that of which they accuse this lad. I have been a Sunday-school boy, and know that such boys do not usually go from the Sunday-school to

steal; but I do know that those who are prowling around when they might be in Sunday-school are ready for any piece of mischief. Here are three boys, it is true, testifying against one and declaring him to be a thief. They seem to be the first who made that discovery, and they are strangers to him, while all who have known him for years declare him to be an honest and worthy lad. Their stories differ so greatly that we cannot make them harmonize. The boys' characters are proved to be bad, and their stories do not belie their characters. The story of the lad who is accused has been given in a simple, straightforward way, as by one who knows that he is telling the truth. Now, which testimony shall be accepted? Shall that of boys known to be bad be taken instead of that of a good, honest lad? Shall the conflicting testimony of those suspicious characters be accepted, and shall an honest boy, because he was brave enough to try to bring to justice those whom he supposed to be thieves, be sent to prison and punished for his courage? What idea will this lad gain of right and justice? What idea will other lads in this city get if this honest boy is punished because he dared to do right? Punish him, and you give a lesson in favor of rascality that boys will soon learn—a lesson that it will take much to correct. You may not only make a criminal of an honest boy by putting him among criminals, but will also give a mighty argument against honesty and uprightness. Let justice be done and

the guilty be punished, but beware that in trying to do so you do not let the hand of Justice strike the innocent, while the guilty escape."

Pat looked anxiously at his lawyer during the address, and still more anxiously at the justice when the speech of Jerry was ended; and when, at last, the trial concluded with the acquittal of the boy, Pat took hold of the young lawyer's hand reached out to him and said,

"Mr. Thompson, if I can't pay you now, some day I will. You saved me." Then, bursting into tears, the lad turned away to his mother, who was waiting to clasp her boy to her arms.

"Never mind about the money," answered Jerry. "I didn't take your case to make money, but to save an honest lad. He has been saved, and that is reward enough for me. Don't think again, much less speak, about paying me; I don't want money. You can't afford to pay."

Before a week passed Pat came to Jerry's office with seventy-eight cents to help pay his lawyer, saying that it was the first he had earned.

"I can't take that money," replied Jerry. "I said that I would not, and you know that a lawyer, like other people, should keep his word. But I can tell you how you can pay me: you can tell others in trouble that I will help them if they deserve help."

Both Pat and his mother, seeing that the lawyer would not accept pay, determined to do what they could to show that they appreciated his services, and

in less than two months Jerry had half a dozen cases at court that Pat and his mother had in one way and another helped to turn to him.

The young lawyer soon became prominent in the city as an advocate for the poor and the worthy. He refused to take the cases of several who were evidently guilty, but urged such to plead guilty and thus receive less punishment for their crimes, and then try to begin better lives. His success at the bar soon brought him wealthier clients, and money came in more rapidly. In a few years Jerry Thompson was a prosperous and rapidly-rising lawyer in the city.

Meanwhile, Raymond was growing in popularity and gaining in wealth. The affairs of the bank were left largely to his management, and the success accompanying that management was proof to the directors that they had put the right man in the right place. But there was a growing restlessness on the part of the bank-cashier; if others did not notice it, his wife and Jerry saw a change. While Mrs. Leigh attributed it to over-care and burden, Jerry began to fear that something was not right. Raymond had allowed Jerry to manage the legal matters pertaining to his property at first, but later Jerry had by accident learned that Raymond had mortgaged the house in which they lived to its full value, and, besides, had mortgaged all the rest of his property. This was the more surprising to Jerry, since Raymond seemed to be making money

outside of his ample salary as cashier. At first he had bought and paid for a large amount of property and seemed very prosperous, but a change had come gradually and quietly; yet not a word had been said to Jerry about it, nor did Mrs. Leigh know that the house in which they lived was mortgaged for its full value.

One summer, when Mrs. Leigh and the children were away in the country and Raymond and Jerry were staying in the city, Jerry noticed that his friend was unusually quiet and gloomy. One evening he came into Jerry's room and said that he had come to have a long talk. Instead of speaking of business, he began talking of old times, and then turned the conversation to Tom Wasson.

"Say, Jerry!" said he, with new life in his words and face; "I wish that Tom was here in the city. I long to have him near, now that he is a minister, and a most successful and earnest one, I am told. Our church is vacant, so I suppose, since our pastor has gone to Europe, and is not to take charge again when he returns. Why can't we get Tom to spend a few weeks with us and supply the pulpit? You are a member of the supply committee; can't you send for him? I want to have him with us; it will seem so much like old times! Dear old fellow! he could always help another out of a scrape the best of any one I ever knew. What do you say?"

"Just the thing! How is it that I never thought of it before? But it is uncertain that Tom will be

willing to come here; he seems well pleased and very successful where he is. Yet I would do almost anything to get him here as pastor; I am sure that he would please our church. He would, however, be a great contrast to Mr. Murray. Tom is the same jolly fellow that he was when a boy, but it is with less boisterousness that he shows it. He is an earnest, faithful Christian and would, I believe, build up our church. Tom is getting a good salary where he is, yet I believe he would be willing to come here on much smaller salary if he had hope of seeing you a Christian."

"You may write him that there is hope, Jerry, and that that is a reason why I want such a man as my pastor: I feel as if I could tell Tom all there is in my heart. But that is not the only, nor perhaps the chief, reason why I want Tom as pastor. I have more faith in that man, Jerry—yourself excepted—than in any man living. He is a true Christian and a wise counselor, and as bright and cheerful as he is sensible. I wish I had had such a pastor before. Jerry, I have made a great mistake."

With that remark Raymond dropped his head on his hand and remained in deep thought. Jerry watched him, but said nothing. For a long time the two sat in silence, Raymond now and then heaving a sigh that told of great trouble, but he did not tell what the trouble was. After sitting and silently thinking until after bedtime, Raymond aroused himself and said,

"Why, here it is past bedtime and I am keeping you up while I sit here dumb as a statue! Pardon me, old boy! I will be a better companion in a few days, I hope. I have some heavy burdens to carry just now; I shall be able to unload before long, I think, and then for the good old times! No; better, Jerry, if Tom comes. But excuse me now; I will tell you more some other time. You have your cares too, and I will not load you down with mine. How different a *man's* life is from that of his boyhood! Who would have thought that I would become such a quiet, sad fellow before I was halfway along manhood's course? But good-night. I hope to feel easier in the morning."

Just as Raymond was closing the door he stepped into the room again and said,

"Jerry, old fellow, you remember telling me that you boys were praying for me? Do you keep it up? Does Tom too, do you think?"

"Yes, Raymond; I have prayed for you every day since I first began, and I think that Tom has too. He often inquires about your soul's interest, as well as about your general welfare. I wish, Raymond, that we might see indications that our prayers are soon to be answered."

"Don't give up, Jerry; I haven't forgot. But oh, if ever I needed prayer, it is now. Don't forget me; pray as though it were for my eternal welfare as well as for my business success."

Saying that, Raymond abruptly left the room,

giving Jerry no chance to reply. The latter heard until late in the night the footsteps of the troubled man as he walked the floor.

The next morning Raymond, wearied and exhausted, appeared at the breakfast-table, but ate nothing and remained very quiet, hurrying away to the bank soon after the meal was ended. When he returned at night, he appeared more distressed than ever, but said little about business until in the evening, after Jerry returned from prayer-meeting; then Raymond went to the lawyer's room and began talking about Tom Wasson. Gradually the conversation turned, until Raymond said,

"I wish Tom were here to-night. I feel that I want to have a talk with him and you together, as we used to have, for I need advice. I don't know what to do. Perhaps he will come soon, and then we can talk more over the affairs that burden me," continued he, as Jerry listened to learn more. "I think I will wait for a few days to speak to you about it, but, Jerry, I am in trouble and need advice and help. I know that if able you would help me, but you can't now, so I will not trouble you. When Tom comes, we'll talk it all over, and you two may show me the way out."

"I am ready to do all in my power to help the best earthly friend I have found," replied Jerry; "only I can't help until I know what to do."

"Some time I will tell you," was the answer, "but not now: there is no need of troubling you

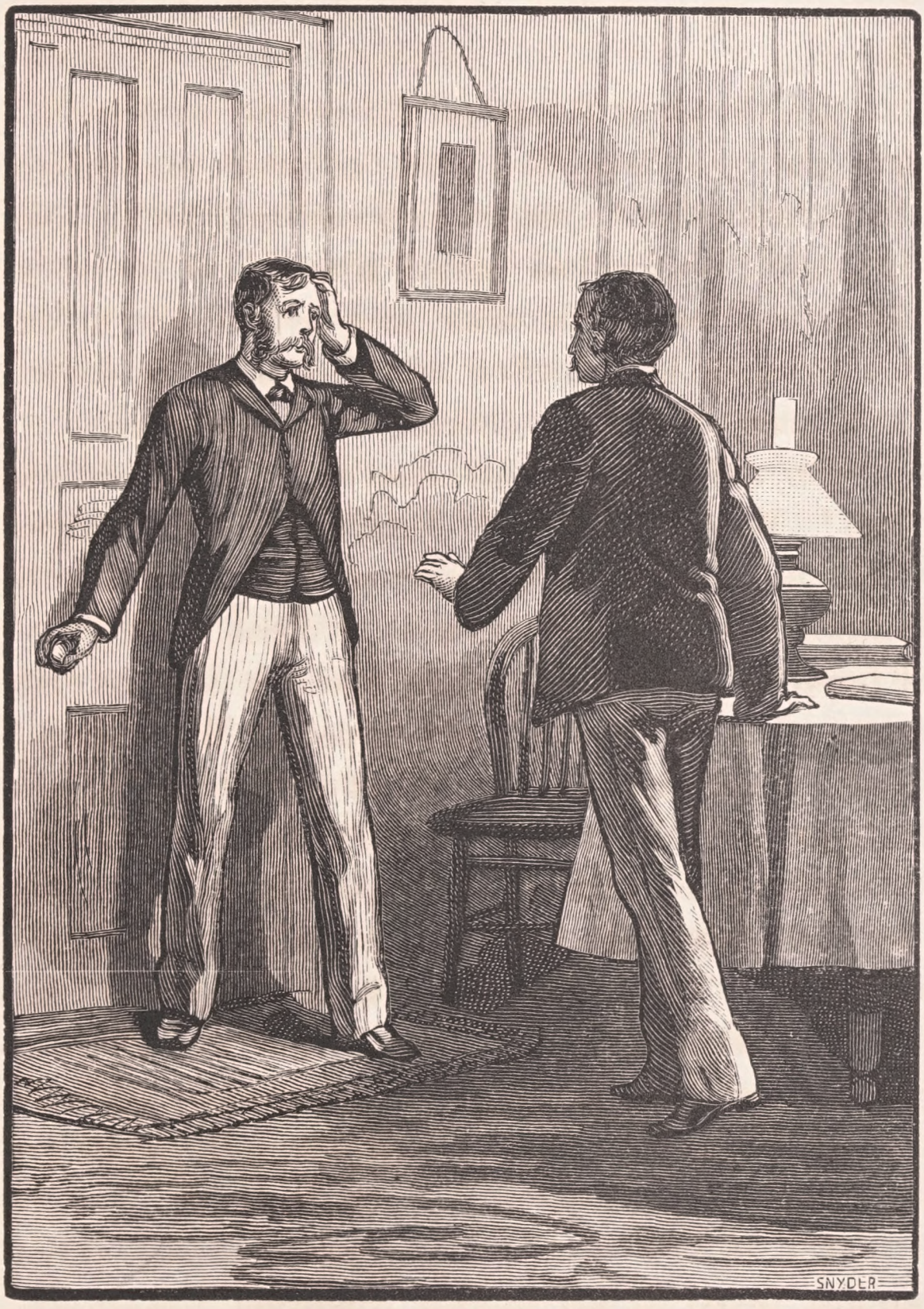
until the time comes. But I must go to bed now; I slept very little last night." Saying this, he left the room.

The next night Raymond did not return home till late, and then was in a state of great excitement. At the tea-table he ate nothing and said little. Not long after Jerry had seated himself in his room Raymond came to the door, and, with almost no explanation or introduction of the subject, broke out in a tone of great excitement and anguish:

"Oh, Jerry, it must all come out! I am a ruined man! What shall I do? I can't hide it any longer. The directors meet to-morrow, and all must be known! It is too late now. What shall I do? I hoped to get through somehow, but it is too late now. I am ruined! I am ruined! What shall I do? What shall I do? What will my father and mother say? Old and feeble, they will be killed by the shock. And what will poor Jennie do? She has not deserved this. What will become of my children? They must ever bear upon them the stain of a father's sin. Yet I did not mean to do wrong; I certainly did not intend to defraud. But it is too late to prove that now. I am a defaulter, and have defrauded the bank!"

Jerry looked on in amazement as his friend almost raved in his excited condition.

"Raymond," said the lawyer, gently but firmly, as soon as he was able to put in a sentence, "sit down and try to be quiet as you tell me calmly



Broken at the Weak Place. Page 338.

the trouble. Perhaps I can help you out by paying at least part of your indebtedness and becoming security for more."

"You!" almost scornfully replied Raymond. "You pay? You can't pay one tenth part. Oh, I have ruined my wife and children, my father-in-law and my friends. If I alone suffered, I could bear it; but that the innocent must suffer for my wrongs is more than I can endure."

After a while Jerry succeeded in calming his friend so as to get from him a more complete story. From that he learned that Raymond had speculated heavily and lost greatly. To meet demands he had mortgaged all his property, and then had borrowed from the bank on poor securities—that is, had used its money and put as security railroad and other stocks and bonds that were worth at market rates far less than the money taken. Later he had taken money without leaving any security at all—had, in other words, actually taken the money and given nothing in return. It was stealing, even if others called it by another name. Besides that, he had loaned others money on notes when both the men who borrowed and those who endorsed were without property or had not nearly as much in value as the money borrowed. Jerry learned, after questioning, that two of these men were really partners with Raymond in stock speculation, or so were closely in sympathy that their business might be called partnership. The lawyer learned further that these men had first de-

ceived Raymond, and thus gotten him to lend them money from the bank, and then had refused to repay unless he would let them have a larger sum of money on notes again. Fearing to lose the first amount and believing their word, he unwillingly yielded, and let them have more. This they professed to invest in stock that they almost proved to him was about to rise—indeed, it did rise enough to make him believe that it was about becoming valuable—and he was even persuaded by them to invest a considerable sum of money in the same stock.

But it is not necessary to tell the whole story, nor is the writer able to give all the details of it. Enough it is to say that Raymond had used and loaned to others more than two thousand dollars for which the bank had no security.

"But how is it," asked Jerry, "that Mr. Harcourt knows nothing about this?"

"He had entire confidence in me, and never seemed to think it worth while to examine the affairs of the bank. I had almost entire charge," replied Raymond.

"But did not the directors look into the affairs of the bank?" inquired the lawyer.

"They took my word for nearly everything," answered the cashier, "and for the rest I made sure that they would find nothing wrong. I did not mean to deceive, but after buying stock and speculating I seemed to get deeper into trouble instead of getting out. I made up my mind again and again

that as soon as I could repay all I would stop borrowing. But then I would make money by a rise in stock and would buy more, and thus it continued both with myself and with those men. I meant to repay every cent, and expected to do so soon, for I knew there must come a change."

For a long time the two talked, until Jerry had gained all the facts—as far, at least, as Raymond was able to give them.

"This is a bad business," said the lawyer, "but it is not the time now to reproach you for what you have done; we must try to do what we can to save you from the consequences of your wrong-doing. I may as well say that I mean to stand by you as far as is in my power, but I don't see yet what is to be done. I think it best that we both go to bed and try to get some sleep; to-morrow we will be able to think more carefully."

Though the two got little sleep that night, both felt better able to look at the trouble in the morning. Until time to go to business the two men talked of the ways to meet the difficulty; then Jerry, who was obliged to be at court to plead a case, hurried to his business, and Raymond went with a heavy heart to the bank.

When the cashier came home at night, he did not notice that a man followed him and remained near his house, keeping a close watch of doors and windows. Raymond knew that the directors had been suspicious, or a meeting would not have been

called for that day. He knew that their suspicions had been greatly increased by a partial examination, but, as some of them were absent the first day, little had been said to the cashier beyond questions to which unsatisfactory answers had been given by him. He was not certain how much they had found out, since they remained so quiet, but he was sure that the next day all must be known.

As soon as the two men could do so they met in Jerry's room to consult. Raymond was less excited than the night before, but a look of despair had taken possession of his face and seemed to have taken hold upon his very soul.

"I can't do anything," was his reply to Jerry's question. "It is too late for any remedy now or for any payments to be made, even if the money could be gotten. It is all out, or will be to-morrow. I can't hide it any longer, and don't mean to try. I am a ruined man; that is a settled fact. There is nothing more for me; I am doomed. There are three choices before me: I must choose one of the three—run away to a foreign country, take my own life or go to prison. I am a defaulter, guilty of embezzling the funds of the bank. I have really defrauded it and allowed others to do the same. I know that I am guilty of acts that must send me to State's prison. There is no escape except by taking one of the other two courses. Jerry, you have proved my true friend in the past, and I shall trust you now. Tell me what to do; I will do what you say. I wish

that I had taken your advice when I was at the academy; there I began what has now been accomplished—the ruination of my character. I only waited until I had reached a higher position that the ruin might be all the greater. It is complete. I deserve it, but oh, my father and mother do not! My excellent wife and innocent children do not! But all must suffer with me—I justly; but they—Oh, Jerry, who would have thought that this would be the end?"

"This is, I hope, the end of speculation and dishonest dealing, Raymond; for your borrowing was not borrowing: it was simple dishonesty. I have no sympathy with that, but I do have with you. Don't give up in despair; there is time not only for repentance, but to build up a new honest and excellent character. You are yet comparatively a young man, and may win a good name for yourself after this has in a measure been atoned for."

"But I can't atone for it. I must go to prison unless I take one of the two other courses. What shall I do, Jerry?"

"Raymond," spoke Jerry, rising and laying his hand firmly on the shoulder of his friend, "you are guilty of a great wrong—a sin against society as well as against those who trusted you, but far more a sin against God; yet with all that guilt you are not the man to add to all a far greater crime."

"What crime?"

"Running away and leaving your family and

friends to bear the blame and sorrow, shame and disgrace, of your acts. If you are such a man, then, indeed, your character is hopelessly ruined, and I can do nothing to help you. But, with all your faults and failings, Raymond Leigh, you are not a coward. You never yet deserted a friend in time of need, even when that friend alone was to blame, and I don't believe that you are the man to desert a friend in the needs that your folly has brought upon him. I am sure you are not so mean and cowardly as to leave your noble wife and innocent children to bear the burden that you made for them, and then flung upon their weak shoulders while you run away. No, Raymond Leigh; you don't know yourself if you think of running away. It is not in your nature. None but a sneak and a miserable coward unworthy the name of father and husband, unworthy the name of man—ay, unworthy the name even of an ordinary brute—would do what you think is a choice before you. It is not a choice for *you;* it is not to be once considered by you. You must go far lower, become more debased than I think you can become and yet live among human beings, if you can now run away and let your wife and children, your parents and friends, take up this awful burden you have heaped together for them. As for taking your own life, you don't know what you propose when you think of that. You never did seriously think of it with a clear knowledge of what it meant. You know that it means eternal

doom; are you ready for that? Would you choose that rather than have a few years of penalty here? What! to escape a few years of just punishment here would you plunge yourself into eternal punishment? You love your wife and children; would you thus voluntarily, to escape the consequences of your sin here, cut yourself off from them for ever? Raymond, my better than brother, the best and truest friend I have in this world, you have no choice. There is but one thing for your manly nature to do. One choice is open to you: that is to go to the directors and make a full confession. Tell them frankly the whole story. There is no disgrace in telling; the disgrace has already become yours. It will be the beginning of a restoration of your character to make a complete confession."

"But that means imprisonment," spoke Raymond, meekly.

"Yes, and it means something better: it means a return to the ways you have forsaken—the ways of honesty. Open, frank confessions never dishonor, while deceit and hiding a part of the facts form the beginning of disgrace. You have gone far enough; now become a man again, and start anew as a man of honor and uprightness. There is only one way of doing that: you must make a full confession, and at once. Don't wait and let the directors discover your crime; for such it is. Pardon me for speaking so bluntly, but I say what I know to be the truth."

"Do you mean that I must go to them in the morning and tell them all?" asked Raymond, beseechingly.

"Yes. Go as soon as you can see the directors, and before they have consulted together or have had time to discover all that you have done. It must come out, and the only course for you is to tell it."

"How can I?" asked the despairing man, with trembling voice.

"From the depth of my heart, Raymond, I sympathize with you, but I know too well that the course I suggest is the only one for you to take. It is the only one for any man who has fallen to follow. Confess, and then make restitution. I will do all in my power to help you make amends and pay back every dollar. That is the true way of repentance."

"But will that save me from prison?" asked Raymond.

"I am unable to say; that will depend on the course the directors may take. You know that you are liable to be tried and may be sent to prison, but even that is far better than to run away and leave your shame and disgrace to others. Pardon me, Raymond, for speaking so harshly, as it may seem to you; perhaps I have got the way of speaking so from my familiarity with wrong-doers. I don't mean to speak to or treat you harshly, yet I can't sympathize with your acts of dishonesty. I abhor anything that looks like using the property of

another without his knowledge and consent, and especially when he would be opposed to such use. But I don't mean to say more about this; pardon what I have said. I want to help you, yet can't shield you from the consequences of your deeds. I shall, however, do all in my power to have the law moderate its grasp and penalty."

The cashier was not himself; his physical strength was giving way, and Jerry feared that Raymond would become ill, if not suffer even a worse calamity. He persuaded his friend to take medicine to quiet and put him to sleep. Raymond had evidently given up all, and meekly yielded to Jerry's advice and before long was sleeping.

Most of the night the lawyer watched by his friend, but it was a watching that had prayer accompanying it. Toward morning Jerry lay down and slept a short time, but was awake before Raymond. Earnest was the lawyer's morning supplication that his friend might have strength to do what was right and might escape the full punishment of his crime.

Raymond at first could not understand how he came to be in Jerry's room. When the events of the past and the distress of the night before came back to his memory, he lay for a while in deep thought, and then, rising, called to his friend.

"Yes, Jerry," said he, "it is the best—the only—thing to do. I am going to see the directors before the time for the bank to open. I will go as

soon as I can see any one of them, and at once shall tell all. I shall take your advice, and meet the consequences of my course. But my poor wife! What a blow it will be to her! Oh, if I could but have seen her and told her myself! She will see it in the papers, for I can't see her after I tell the directors. I know too well how they will receive my confession. From the extreme confidence they have placed in me they will go to the other extreme, and regard me as the blackest of villains and treat me accordingly. Yet I deserve it all, and I mean to meet the result."

Jerry listened and tried to cheer up his friend with prospects of prosperity after the time of repentance and penalty had gone, but Raymond slowly relapsed into the gloom of the night before.

"I must go to prison," said he, "and will be an old man when I come out. There is no hope for me. Then what will become of my family while I am paying the penalty of my embezzlement? They must starve."

"Raymond," said Jerry, "do you think that I will neglect the family of the man who has made me what I am? Not until I lose the last dollar I have and become friendless, homeless and helpless shall the family of Raymond Leigh be left helpless. Don't for a moment think of them. As a brother I shall do all in my power to care for yours until you come back to take your place as husband and father."

Raymond went to see one of the directors, and was surprised to learn that his crime had already been more than suspected; yet the confession had some effect on the man. The two went to the bank early, and there the cashier told the whole story of his dishonesty. He held nothing back, made no excuses, answered each question as well as he could, and after the whole confession said,

"Gentlemen, I have told you all. I am guilty; I throw myself on your mercy. I deserve the full penalty of the law, and ask no clemency for myself. I knew what I was doing, yet I did not intend to defraud, as I expected to repay every dollar. But I ask for mercy because of my noble wife and innocent children, because of my aged father and mother, and—not least—because of the good man who is president. He knows nothing of all this from me. He, like you, trusted me too much, and I took advantage of that confidence. He is as innocent as a child of all my evil-doings. Were he not away, trying to regain his weakened health, I should have told him the story first."

As Raymond had foretold, the directors were not only indignant, but angry, that the man in whom they had placed such confidence had betrayed them. They were angry, too, because they had allowed him to do much as he chose without consulting them. They knew that they had been careless, and had by their neglect given the cashier opportunity to defraud. They knew that society would

hold them guilty with the dishonest cashier, and declare that it was owing to their own carelessness that the loss had occurred. They knew that they had not done their duty, and merely because they did not wish to trouble themselves with work that they supposed another was doing as well as, if not better than, they could do it.

After Raymond had retired to give them an opportunity to decide what to do, the directors most bitterly denounced the cashier, and most of them were eager to have him suffer at once the full penalty of the law. They said nothing of their own neglect; the cashier must bear all the blame. Though one or two urged mercy, the majority decided that Raymond should be arrested at once and sent to prison to await trial. Before noon the cashier was in prison.

Raymond at once sent for Jerry and told him that he was ready to do whatever was deemed best. At Jerry's advice, Raymond at the time of trial pleaded guilty of the crime charged against him, and no witnesses were called to testify. Before the sentence was pronounced Jerry was allowed to plead for mercy to his client. After beginning his address he said,

"Pardon a personal allusion. Many years ago, escaping from the bondage of cruel men, I wandered a friendless lad, a fugitive seeking only to be separated as far as possible from my worse than tyrannical masters. Taking the most unfrequented

roads, hiding from human sight, sleeping in shelter removed from human habitations, I cared only to get away from captivity. Thus passed several days; then hunger overcame my fear of being sent back to the place whence I had escaped, and, weary, footsore, ragged, dirty and starving, I was compelled to seek food. Then I came to the home of Raymond Leigh. Instead of driving me from the door as a dirty tramp, he welcomed me to his father's home; he gave me food and shelter; from his scant supply of pocket-money he bought me clothing, and then persuaded his parents to take me into their home that I might work and gain an honest livelihood. When others ridiculed and despised the uncouth stranger, he helped me to become like others and made them treat me kindly. When I longed to learn more, he taught me. When I wished to become educated, he, after giving me the ambition, became my teacher. He took me to Sabbath-school and church, where by the goodness of God I became, as I believe, a Christian. When I approached manhood and yearned with almost a hopeless longing to enter on a profession, his money educated me; he helped me all the way from the first day I entered college until in my chosen profession I was able to care for my own wants. I am pleading before you to-day because Raymond Leigh gave me the means to procure my education. To him I owe it, by the goodness of divine Providence, that I am not now a worthless tramp or, even worse, a

convicted criminal. Do you wonder that I plead for him who of all men living has proved my best friend?

"But not alone to me has he proved faithful; everywhere has his noble, generous nature gained him friends. Fearless in danger as he is generous, he has proved himself to be a man who deserves a place among other than criminals. I have seen him twice plunge into the cabin of a submerged vessel and at the risk of his life bring back to life and safety the drowning stranger. I have met brave, heroic men, but know of none more ready to risk life to save others than the man whose cause I plead before you to-day.

"I add one thing more; I would not be true to right and the highest principles of uprightness did I not say it. While a counsel must study the interest of his client, he must not forget that he is always retained by truth and uprightness. As a boy Raymond Leigh was ready to lend anything to others, or even give to those who needed; as a boy he was just as ready to borrow, expecting others to prove as generous as himself. This habit of borrowing grew upon him until he became careless of the rights of others. Neglected, this habit grew, and has brought him where he is to-day. Not dishonesty, not lack of good intention, not absence of principle, but a bad habit, has made Raymond Leigh a confessed criminal. Making these admissions not only for the sake of truth, but for the sake of a man

who would rather suffer for his wrong-doing and make amends than escape the penalty and be ever pursued by an active conscience, I now ask Your Honor to remember that mercy as well as justice pleads—not only mercy to my client, but mercy for the sake of a faithful wife, mercy for the sake of innocent children, mercy for the sake of a noble father and a worthy mother whose white hairs are telling that the next life must soon claim them."

When the lawyer had concluded his address, Raymond was asked if he had anything to say.

"Only this," was the answer: "my tried friend and trusted counsel has told the truth, except that he has given me far more credit than I deserve. It was for the purpose he has mentioned that I sought to gain riches. That I might not lose the opportunity so close at hand, as I believed, I borrowed the money of the bank. It was taken with the expectation of soon repaying every dollar. I was certain that I could soon repay; I believed what others told me. But not of others would I speak; I am guilty of taking what was entrusted to me and lending it to others without being fully assured that it was safe. More than that, I took myself, without leaving satisfactory security, and later without any security at all, money that was not my own. I wish to utter a word of warning here, and am glad that my counsel has already spoken it. Not in the bank, but when I was a boy in the country, I began a course that has now brought me before you a con-

fessed criminal. I took what was not my own. True, it was simply borrowed, but often without the owner's permission or knowledge, though with the honest purpose of returning everything. But I took what I had no right to take. I did not try in boyhood and early manhood to conquer that fault. My best of friends, who has just pleaded my cause, warned me of the danger and urged me to seek the help of a higher than human power, but I thought that my own strength would keep me and my own wisdom guide me in times of danger. By a terrible lesson I have learned that there is no safety in time of temptation but in the strictest Christian principle and trust in an almighty Power. What is left of life to me shall be spent in living according to the lesson I have learned. I have nothing more to say."

With deep feeling the judge sentenced Raymond to serve five years in the State's prison.

One day later Raymond Leigh was a criminal in prison, working hard, living on the coarsest fare and mingling with the worst of characters. The one weak place in his character had broken when it had been tried, and the result was a felon's name, a criminal's reputation clinging to him. He was careless about the property of others, but it cost him a terrible price in the end.

Here for the time we leave Raymond Leigh suffering the consequences of the great fault of his boyhood.

CHAPTER XI.

STARTING ANEW.

IT need hardly be told how crushed were old Mr. and Mrs. Leigh when they heard of their son's fall, nor how shocked was Raymond's wife when she learned that her husband had been arrested. She at once came to the city and visited him in prison, and there learned from himself the whole story. He told her too that all their property was gone, and that the house that had been their home would be sold and she would be left without anything to support herself and children.

"But," added he, "I leave you a friend who will do all for you that a brother could do. Jerry will stand by you; you can depend on his judgment, on his sympathy, on his help, always and everywhere."

Jerry remained as faithful to Raymond while awaiting trial as he had been at any time of the life of the two together. Not only did he advise about the approaching trial, but he was as faithful to plead with his friend to consider another and far more important trial approaching.

"I need say nothing to you about your mistake,"

spoke Jerry one day before the trial, as Raymond was counseling with him as to the future. "It has been made; now set yourself to the task of remedying it. Begin by going to Christ and starting anew as a Christian. It is the only safe, as it is the only wise, way."

"That is exactly what I mean to do," was the answer, "as soon as all this is over and I am a free man again. But this is no place for a man to think of being a Christian, nor is this the time either, when a man is suffering the penalty of his wrongs. I do not know how long it will take to repay all my debts, but as soon as they have been paid, be the time sooner or later, I mean to become a Christian. I pledge you my word for that."

"And should you die before," interrupted Jerry, "you would be a lost man for eternity."

"I shall live through it, and at the end prove that I am not a rogue," answered Raymond. "I shall live to repay every dollar I have lost—every dollar!"

"But, Raymond, there can be no better time than the present for repentance. Don't wait; you have put it off too long already. Now is the accepted time, God's book tells us; let it be your time."

"I want first to get out of this difficulty," was the response. "I feel more and more sure that all will be well in the end. I am growing hopeful already."

Jerry's urging was not without effect, however,

though not until Raymond was in the State's prison and visited by his friend did he tell him decidedly that he had started to become a Christian. His words to the judge before sentence had been pronounced had, however, given Jerry to understand that Raymond had changed his mind about the time when he meant to begin to seek the Saviour.

Time will not allow a description of the struggles of the convicted man to begin in the State's prison a Christian life. Jerry's visits were as often as he could make them, and his counsels with his friend, as the two talked together, seemed to make the way to the Saviour clear to the prisoner. A letter from the chaplain told Jerry the news for which he had hoped and longed—that Raymond had found the Saviour and was a happy Christian.

At last the prayers of the boys were answered, but how long had they waited! Perhaps all had not continued to pray for the conversion of Raymond, but two had daily laid the same petition at the mercy-seat, and those two were Jerry and Tom. They rejoiced together over the good news.

Tom—or the Rev. Thomas Wasson, as he was now called—had, at Jerry's invitation as chairman of the committee on supplies for the pulpit of the church of which Jerry was a member and an officer, visited his old friends, but to find Raymond arrested and awaiting trial. They were sad sermons that Mr. Wasson preached to a sad people, for Raymond Leigh was beloved and honored by those attending

the church of which his wife and his friend were members. Perhaps it was that very sadness that drew the minister and the people together. If Tom —we must continue to call him so—had ever been eloquent in times of sadness, he was eloquent that first Sabbath when he preached in the city church. A large number were out to see and to hear about the Leighs and how Mrs. Leigh acted now that her husband was locked in prison. They did not learn much that way, as none of the Leigh family were at church except Jerry: he was counted a member of the family. If the people came from curiosity, they gained what they did not seek. Tom's sermon had the heart of the generous fellow all through it; the tremor of his voice and the tears in his eyes told that the preacher felt the words he spoke. The people listened with intense interest; even a larger congregation in the evening told of a deep interest of some kind in that church.

"Can we get your friend as pastor?" asked several of Jerry as they drew him away from Tom.

"I don't know," was the reply; "I wish we could. I have known him from boyhood, and know him to be one of the best of men, but have never seen him so deeply moved as he has been to-day. He is always so full of life and fun that it even bubbles over at times in the pulpit. He feels very deeply the trouble of our old friend Mr. Leigh. It was that, I think, in his mind to-day that gave him such pathos and feeling."

"He touched our sympathies," said the man, "though none would have known that he had Leigh in mind at all if it had not been known that you three were boys together. I would like, however, to hear that man preach again. I never heard such an appeal for charity to the fallen and sympathy for the weak as he made this morning. If there be any in this church who feel bitterly toward Leigh and his family, I think they were absent this morning. And what was said was so appropriate, yet so put, that no one could say the preacher had any reference whatever to Mr. Leigh. But I want to hear Mr. Wasson again. Please try to get him here to supply our pulpit again in the near future. That man will draw; and if I don't mistake, he will hold all he draws. He is so full of sympathy that he will draw all hearts to him. He seems to me to have learned from the great Master himself how to sympathize with the fallen."

Tom preached again, and was called to become the pastor. He accepted the call, and was soon settled as the pastor of Jerry and of the Leigh family. It need only be added that he was the same Tom that he proved himself to be in his boyhood—full of life aud fun—and became the friend of rich and poor, but more than all was beloved by the children.

Jerry and his pastor visited their friend in prison as well as wrote to him, and no doubt the advice of the two had much to do with the firm stand the convicted man at once took in prison. Though

more sad, he remained the same kind, gentle friend of all, but as firm for the right as he was gentle. His companions in prison learned to respect the sad-faced man, and to reply as politely as he was polite to them. Even the roughest men admitted that Leigh was a man who did not belong in prison, but had got there by some mistake. Yet Raymond, when he spoke of his punishment, though he seldom referred to it, admitted that he was justly sentenced. He said that, while he surely did not intend to defraud, it was his business to see that he was not defrauding, and he had not done that; had he honestly and fairly done his duty, he would not have been sent to prison. After a while the men began to look upon the quiet convict as a man who was controlled by another principle than that which prompted them. Slowly they learned that it was the principle of Christian life that made Leigh the man he was proving to be. One and another declared that if Christians ever got into prison, one of them had come to stay there for a while.

With Raymond it was not merely an outward change, but one of the heart, and that showed itself all through the life. His religion spoke for itself as he lived it, nor were his lips silent. He did not force others to listen nor did he speak to those unwilling to hear, yet he lost no opportunity to say a word to his companions for the Saviour.

The keepers of the prison were not long in learning that in the convicted cashier they had a man

whom they were compelled rather to respect than to despise. He was not long forced to engage in hard work nor yet to mingle with the worst criminals. Easier work and a more honorable position were given him, and he always gave satisfaction. Those in charge of the prisoners said that if all were like him there would hardly be need of keepers; his conscience seemed to be his best keeper.

After his friend had been sentenced Jerry busied himself in caring for Raymond's property. He found it mortgaged to its full value, and allowed it all to be sold for the liquidation of the mortgage. The home of Raymond he determined to save; that he bought in Mrs. Leigh's name, and gave her the deed for it. She refused to accept it as a gift, nor would she take it at all until Jerry said that he was merely doing to the wife of his best friend as that friend had done to him, and that when Raymond was able to repay he would accept the money for the property. With this understanding Mrs. Leigh took the deed, and Jerry continued boarding with her and her family. He offered to lend Mrs. Leigh all the money she needed in addition to what he paid for his board and rooms, and said that he would expect to do it merely as a business accommodation until Raymond was in a position to pay back all the money loaned. Jerry further told Mrs. Leigh that he would like to pay for the music-lessons of the two older children, and urged that they should not be compelled to neglect their

studies until their father was able to pay again for the lessons.

"What music-teacher will you get?" asked Mrs. Leigh.

"I have heard that Miss Burton is giving lessons, and is trying to earn her livelihood by teaching music," replied Jerry, "and I would suggest that you employ her."

"Very well," was the answer; "if you wish the children to take lessons from her, make any arrangements you choose."

"Oh, you make the arrangements," said Jerry; "it will not do for me to do it. Say nothing about me. I will give you the money to pay in advance."

The first time Jerry saw Raymond after he had been sent to State's prison the cashier told the lawyer to buy from the bank the securities on which he had borrowed the money there.

"I bought that stock and those bonds," said Raymond, "at a very low price, because they had very little present value, but I was sure that they would become valuable. When I deposited them as security for the money I borrowed from the bank, I believed that they would soon become of far more value than the money taken. I am more sure than ever that they will be worth one hundred cents on a dollar. I know that the directors do not believe it, but they do not know what to do about that stock and those bonds. Buy them yourself and

hold them for a short time, and you will find that you have lost nothing." He then told Jerry what reasons he had for believing the property would become valuable before long, and the lawyer at once, on his return to the city, bought at a very low price the securities held by the bank.

Mr. Harcourt did not return until some time after Raymond had been sentenced. Not until on his way home had he learned anything of the dishonesty of his son-in-law, and not until he reached the city did he learn the whole story. He was surprised and almost overwhelmed with shame—not more because his own son-in-law was guilty than because he had allowed him such opportunities to defraud the bank. At first he intended proposing to assume all of Raymond's debts; but when he learned how careless the directors had been during his own prolonged absence while trying to regain his health, and that most of the dishonesty had occurred during that absence, and learned, further, how eager the directors were to make his son-in-law bear all the blame, he determined to carry only his own share of the loss. Mr. Harcourt was a large stockholder in the bank, and his own loss was not small.

When Mr. Harcourt learned of Jerry's generosity to Mrs. Leigh, he insisted on repaying Jerry every cent, and urged the lawyer to use his money for other worthy purposes; "for," said he, "it is but just that a father should support his own daughter

in time of need. Nor is it more than is her right. I shall merely give her a share of my property a little sooner than I intended."

With the money thus returned Jerry bought the notes against Raymond's partners or companions. These the bank was glad to sell at a large discount, believing that the notes were worthless. Jerry was not so sure that they could not be collected, but knew the men, knew their character, and believed that he could compel them to pay back their ill-gotten gains.

As soon as Raymond had been arrested two of these men disappeared from the city, nor did they return until a year after, and then came back under assumed names and lived in a different part of the city from that in which they had before resided. But the lawyer had kept close watch of the men during their absence, and knew them when they returned, though he passed and repassed them on the streets as if he had never known them. Before the two men had been back a year and a half Jerry had compelled them to pay the notes, with every cent of interest due, and had driven the scoundrels from the city.

When Raymond had served three years of his sentence, Jerry began to try to get a pardon for his friend. He tried to persuade the directors to sign a petition for it, but all except two refused, and insisted that the defrauding cashier should suffer the full penalty of the law.

"How did you succeed with the directors?" asked Mr. Wasson the pastor as Jerry called at his study to talk about getting their friend out of prison.

"I did not succeed at all," was the answer. "Two favored, but all the rest insisted that he should not be pardoned at all; they said that he should suffer as an example. I believe that he should suffer for the wrong he has done and be a warning to others; more than that, I believe that his character for borrowing without caring about returning should be shown to be at the bottom of the whole trouble; but when that all has been done, then I think it time to end the punishment. It certainly has had its proper effect on Raymond. Society has been warned, and as far as is likely that it be affected by this example the work has been done. Raymond's crime was one of lack of business honesty rather than of downright rascality. Carelessness may be a crime, and a crime that ought to be severely punished, but not as severely as willful, deliberate wickedness. I think that Raymond has been punished sufficiently. But it is useless to argue about it to the directors; they mean to make him suffer all they can for their own neglect, as well as for his evil deeds."

"Jerry," said the minister, "when we went fishing and could not catch the fish we were after with angle-worms, we went for grubs. Now, if you can't get the directors to favor a pardon for Raymond, when he justly should have one, by present-

ing the idea of justice, perhaps you can by presenting an idea that they can understand. Raymond intends paying back every dollar of the money the bank lost by him; why not give them a hint about that? It may be understood by them when one of less selfish character would fail to make an impression upon their minds. How mean and selfish men become when money is their object and idol!"

"I see," replied Jerry; "that is a good hint. I'll try it."

The lawyer suggested to the directors of the bank later not only that Raymond had suffered sufficiently for his crime, but that the longer he was kept in prison the longer would it be before he could earn money to repay what he had lost.

"That's so! That's so!" said one who had been opposed to signing the petition. "If he is to repay what he took from the bank, then he may as well be at it."

The petition was signed by every director; many besides them put their names to the request that Raymond Leigh be pardoned for the rest of the term for which he was sentenced. The character of the man since he had been in prison had much influence in procuring a pardon, but not least of the influences was Jerry's simple but earnest plea for his friend. The petition was granted: Raymond was pardoned, and became again a free man.

Three men left the prison together, but it was impossible to tell which of the three was the most

happy—Tom, Raymond or Jerry. They seemed like boys in Metona again. The three went to the home of the Leighs in the city, where a hearty, if perhaps sad, welcome was given the long-absent one. Mrs. Leigh was too wise and worthy a woman to give her husband anything but a hearty welcome, nor was there in it a reminder of prison-life. None were more glad to see the father than were Raymond's children. They knew—at least, the older ones did—where he had been, and why; but a sensible mother had so taught them that Raymond was the same father to them he would have been had his absence been for another cause than to suffer the penalty of his wrong-doing. Even little Jerry—only a babe when his father left—acted as if he was the most delighted of all to see his "dear papa back" as the little fellow nestled his head in Raymond's bosom.

After supper, at which only Raymond's family, with Jerry and the pastor, were present, the father said to Mrs. Leigh,

"Jennie, as it is not far from bedtime for the children, we will have family worship."

This was said in so quiet and matter-of-fact a tone that it seemed as if Raymond had always been accustomed to conduct family worship. Taking the Bible from the place where it was kept for daily use, Raymond said, as he turned to Mr. Wasson,

"My pastor will pardon me for leading at family

worship to-night, even though my minister be present?"

After the reading all kneeled in prayer while Raymond led them in supplication. It was his first public prayer during his life outside of the prison, but it showed no embarrassment. Full of thanksgiving, yet penitent and humble, that prayer told better than he could have told to others how deeply Raymond felt his disgrace and the shame of prison-life, but the petitions for help in the future told as plainly that the man had started anew to live, and meant to live, a life devoted to Christ. It was a consecration of himself and all his family, his talents and all he might possess in the future, to the service of the Lord.

After Mrs. Leigh had taken the children to bed Tom said,

"Well, old boy, our hopes at last for you are realized and our prayers are answered.—And it did not seem so long to wait, after all, does it, Jerry?"

"Yes, realized," answered Raymond; "but I needed a fearful discipline first. I thought myself able to live an upright life without Christ; I have learned my awful mistake. Your prayers are answered, and I am thankful that it is so; but, fellows—pardon the old word—the Lord seems to have seen that to answer them he must lead me down first into the Valley of Humiliation. I required it, no doubt, for I was too proud to feel my need of divine help."

"The Lord takes different ways to bring us to himself, but he gets us; and I do not think in the end it will make much difference what way is taken, providing we reach him at last," said the pastor.

"While I feel thankful to him, I shall always remember you fellows for continuing to pray for me," spoke Raymond.

"You will not forget another who prayed for you with far more intensity than we," said Jerry. "If ever a woman prayed for a husband, your wife prayed for you; and I am sure that no one feels more than she the power of prayer."

"Yes, boys," answered Raymond, while his voice trembled; "I know that if ever a man had a true wife I have. Not a word of reproof has she given me from the first. Though almost heartbroken herself, she tried to cheer me with brighter prospects ahead; and by the grace of God those prospects shall be realized. But I want to have a talk with you both, and wish your advice. I am a free man now, yet the taint of the prison will be about me. What I wish to ask is your advice as to my future. I have three great objects of life now—one, to pay back all the bank lost through me; another, to regain my lost character before the world; and the third, to serve the Lord to make up as far as possible for my neglect of his service in the past. Now the great question is, where shall I begin? What do you think?"

"I don't know that you wish your pastor—for

such I am now," said Tom—"to advise you about temporal things; but, whether or not your pastor advises, Tom Wasson will. When we boys learned to skate, we fell down at first; but we did not creep a long distance over the ice until we could find a place where no one saw us before we dared try to get on our feet again: we just tried to get up where we fell down."

"I see your advice," replied Raymond; "it is just like the Tom Wasson of old.—Now, Jerry, what do you advise?"

"I am not sure that my advice will be like Tom's. —Excuse me, pastor."

"We are 'Jerry,' 'Raymond' and 'Tom' here," spoke the minister, "and he who can't be one of the Metona boys may be what he likes; but I belong to Metona, and I have two friends—friends for ever—Jerry Thompson and Raymond Leigh. They are to remain 'Raymond' and 'Jerry' to me, come what may, as I hope always to remain 'Tom' to them—except out in company, of course."

"Well, Raymond, I have noticed that if a man can't stand on smooth ice he may do it on rough," said Jerry, "and I am not sure that you would not do better to start where you would not have so heavy a burden to bear at first. By starting elsewhere you might get a standing, and with that come back here and hold it."

"True, Jerry; yet some might say, 'That fellow is the one that tumbled. He is not the kind to hold

up his head here. Let's trip him;' and they might do it. But if people here saw him getting up and bravely struggling to stand, they might say that he is worthy, and they would let him alone even though they gave no help. My advice is to start anew right here. Show people what you are made of. You can by the grace of God do it, and let his grace have full credit for the sustaining power. That is what Tom Wasson thinks."

"Perhaps you are right, Tom," answered Jerry. "I am not sure but it is the best thing to do. It surely is a courageous thing to undertake. None but a brave, determined man would resolve to regain it in the very place where he lost his reputation. I doubt the wisdom of running away to regain a lost character."

"And I doubt the wisdom of running away from any evil I have done without trying to make full reparation," said Tom. "It will certainly be much harder to rise here, with all the load resting on you; but when you do get up, no one can pull you down, as might be done if you rose elsewhere. Here you are fully known, but go to another place, and sooner or later your past reputation will get there, and probably at exactly the wrong time. You will have nothing to fear in the line of a secret that may be told if you begin anew here. The worst will all be told, and you will constantly be making that worst better."

"I am obliged to you for what you have said,"

replied Raymond; "it has fixed my determination to do as you advise. I will not run away from a bad character that I have made for myself, but will go to work and repair that character. It seems to be the only honorable way. Besides, I have had enough of this dreading to be found out; that is worse than punishment. Further than that, I don't mean to let my children suffer under the burden of a father's bad name if in my power to regain a good one."

"I hardly need advise you to come out as decidedly in public for Christ," said Tom. "Let the world know that you have changed not only outwardly, but from the heart."

At the next communion Raymond united with the church, and became at once an active though modest worker in the field. While some whispered that he might have kept himself back for a while, they soon forgot to say unfair things of him when they saw that he never put himself forward unless it was necessary to take a place that no one else would fill. This was specially so if the place was a humble one and the work unnoticed.

After Raymond had become settled down at home again, the question with him was what to do. He was sitting one evening in Jerry's room talking with the lawyer and Tom, who felt that something was wrong if he was not at the home of the Leighs one evening each week, when Raymond said,

"Now that I am back, and have, as far as I can,

arranged my affairs, I want to get to work at something. It will not do for me to be idle. I have been looking around and inquiring for some employment, but can find nothing. I expected it, so am not disappointed; my record is against me. What opportunity can I get to change that record?"

"Raymond, I hope that you will not be offended if I make you an offer?" answered Jerry. "It is the best I can do at present; I only wish I could offer more."

"No matter what it be," replied Raymond. "I must have work, and will take the first that comes, no matter though it be to keep the streets clean, providing the work be honest."

"Well, it is not sweeping the streets, but it is to help me clear up my work. You can write both well and rapidly; and if you will help me in my office, I will pay you whatever you think is fair. As soon as a better opportunity comes, then you can take it."

"I'm your man," said Raymond, "and shall begin to-morrow morning if you say so. It is time that I should begin to support my family. Mr. Harcourt has been very kind, and has given them all they could ask for, and you, Jerry, could not have done more had you been a brother; but it is my business to earn money to support them."

"We have no trouble to support our families, Jerry, have we?" said the minister; "we can take things easy. But, Jerry, honestly, why do you live a single man?"

This question caused the lawyer to blush and turn away his face, as if to attend to something that he had forgotten until that moment. He had no answer, and Raymond followed the question of the minister with another:

"That's so, Jerry! Why do you lose half the joys of life by living a bachelor?"

"I don't know that I lose half the joys," responded Jerry. "I am only following my pastor's example."

"Oh, that will not do, Jerry," spoke Tom; "follow my preaching rather than my practice. I have probably told you, on the best of authority, that it is not good for man to be alone."

"Yes, and proved by your own life that you thought there are exceptions," replied Jerry. "When you set the example, I may be ready to follow."

"And not before, Jerry?" asked Raymond.

"Can't say as to that," was the answer.

"Well, Tom, I don't think that you need say anything to Jerry on that subject while yours is such a glaring exception to the rule; I was about saying such an example to the contrary. But why have you, a popular preacher, and, I know, a beloved and successful pastor, not taken a wife to add to your own comfort, as well as to be a help meet for you?"

"Thank you for the compliments, but they should be your answer. If I am popular and successful

and beloved, why risk popularity, success and love by trying to divide them? This fact is that I have never thought I should marry; I believe in letting well enough alone. Providence does not seem to have sent along the one who promised to be a help meet for me, and I have not worried about it. If I am to marry, I suppose duty will be made plain to me. It has not been thus far, and I am content to remain as I am."

"I don't know that you give the best possible reason," said Jerry. "Perhaps Providence did send along the very one to suit you, and you turned your head the other way; then she passed on. Now, be honest, Tom: have you never thought about getting married?"

"Thought about it? Of course, just as a man thinks about getting the small-pox or the measles—to keep away from it. No; that is not fair. I will be candid on one condition, Jerry—that you be the same."

"That is fair," spoke Raymond. "Go ahead, and Jerry will tell his views; if he does not, I will."

"All right," said the minister. "Yes, I have thought seriously about marrying, but have never decided to do it; on the contrary, I have concluded not to give up my bachelor's life until I see it to be my duty. It seems to me that I will be a more efficient pastor—at least, will give my thoughts more to my parish—if I have no family cares to distract me. Besides, I have a reason that has never been

told by me: I am educating some fellows for the ministry; if I marry, it will cost me more to live, and so I shall have less to give for the work of the Master."

"Educating fellows for the ministry?" repeated Raymond. "Where?"

"In America, and two in India. A missionary visited my congregation and asked if any one would support two boys in India who were longing to become preachers, and two of my parishioners took each one. After a while they were unable to continue the work, and I took it; it seemed too bad that the poor fellows should stop. After they became preachers I found that I could keep it up, and have done so. At the same time, I am helping three fine young men through with their studies for the ministry in America."

"Educating five men!" spoke Jerry, in astonishment. "Why, how do you do it, Tom? Your salary here is not so very large, and living in the city is expensive."

"Oh, I manage somehow by not wasting, and I have a few hundreds at the end of the year if I don't spend too much. You see, I have no family to support, so should take my share in educating others. There! you have my whole reason."

"And a good one it is too, Tom, and just like you," said Raymond. "But you have taught me a lesson; I shall remember it."

"Now, Jerry, you have my secret; let us have

yours as far as it may be proper for us to know," spoke Tom.

"Why, I live a single man," answered Jerry, hesitatingly, "because—because— Well, because I don't know of any one who wants me."

"Don't you, Jerry? Be honest, now," said Raymond.

"I am honest," was the response; "I don't know of any one in the whole world who would take me, and whom I would like."

"Oh, well, as to whom you like I don't feel able to say," said Raymond, "but I might give a hint as to the person who might be willing to accept Jerry Thompson's offer of heart and hand."

"Do you believe anybody whom I would like would take me?" asked Jerry, with a look that had too much earnestness to be a mere look of inquisitiveness.

"Now, see here, Jerry! you can't deceive us. We have seen this thing going on too long to be deceived," said Tom. "Here you, a brave fellow as ever lived, are too timid to say that your heart is your own to a lady who would like to possess it."

"You are talking riddles to me," spoke Jerry.

"But riddles that have easy answers," replied Tom. "Shall I give the answers—or one, at least?"

"Yes," said Jerry.

"Well, I am only an old bachelor, but am not blind. I have seen that Miss Burton is not a mu-

sic-teacher in the homes of many of your friends for nothing. I know how it happened that a certain bachelor lawyer has pleaded the case of this lady far better with his friends than he has his own with her."

"Do you think I would win the case if I should plead for myself?" asked Jerry, with an earnest face.

"You might try it," answered Tom, "and I doubt if the decision would be against you, though I believe that you would be sentenced to transportation for life."

"Do you really think so?" inquired the lawyer, with an intense earnestness that showed how serious he was.

"Yes," answered Tom, "unless I mistake greatly. Nor is it my opinion alone. But, as we boys used to say, try for yourself."

And Jerry did try, and found that the minister was right. He was astonished to find that Miss Burton had remained single until people called her an old maid because she did not wish to marry any other than himself, though more than one worthy young man had offered to make her his wife. She told him that from the time she had heard the words of the brave boy on the yacht, offering to risk his own life rather than have Raymond risk his, she had been unable to keep him from her mind. She told him, too, that she had often gone to public meetings that she might see him and hear him speak,

and had even visited the court-room with friends who wished to hear the trials and testimony, while she cared only to hear and to see the lawyer whom she believed to be the best and noblest of men.

"And why did not you let me know," asked Jerry, "that I was more to you than others were?"

"It was not my business to plead," answered she. "I thought that a lawyer who did not care enough about his own case to plead for himself was not very anxious about it."

"Then you never heard the saying that a client who pleads his own case has a fool for a lawyer?" said Jerry.

When her term closed with her pupils, Miss Burton gave up teaching music, and not long after became Mrs. Jerry Thompson. In a few years she was Mrs. Judge Thompson, for Jerry was appointed judge of one of the city courts.

It remains to tell of Raymond. Not long after his pardon and return home he was offered a position of far more importance than Jerry's office afforded. For a while he remained there, and then Mr. Harcourt, who was now becoming an old man, told his daughter, Mrs. Leigh, that he had determined to divide a part of his property among his children, and, since Raymond had proved that he intended to live from the highest Christian principles, he would allow her to take her share and do with it what she chose.

"Father, if you will allow it, I will give it to

my husband and let him pay, as far as it will, his indebtedness to the bank."

"But the bank has no legal claim against him, my daughter," replied Mr. Harcourt, "and it would be folly to throw away that money."

"He has told me that to a Christian there is a higher law than that of the land, and that law he means to obey. As soon as able he will repay with interest every dollar that the bank has lost by him."

"Well, I have nothing to say," replied Mr. Harcourt, "except that if you propose doing that with the money I will hold it for a while and see if I can't do better with it for you and Raymond. I will invest it in the stock of a manufacturing company in the city, and then, with what I already own, I shall hold the controlling power, and can put Raymond in as one of the officers. He is certainly a most capable business-man, and will make a success of any business that has half a chance."

The money was invested in the manufacture of goods that had a steady and sure sale, and Raymond was made vice-president of the company, at a good salary, while most of the work, care and responsibility of the president's position was placed upon him. The business, good before, took a new start with its new manager, and before two years had passed the factory was enlarged to double its size. All the money that he could save from his salary and that Mrs. Leigh received from her share of the profits of the factory was kept—except, of course,

what was required for living expenses—for paying to the bank. But the debt there was great, and the savings were small in comparison.

One day Jerry, who was now living in a home of his own, called at the house of the Leighs and asked to see Raymond alone.

"Say, Raymond!" said he; "I have sold those railroad stocks and bonds, and have the money for all. I sold them at par. It was a good investment for you, after all. Now, how soon shall I pay over the money to you?"

"To me? What do you mean? I have no claim on them. You bought them from the bank as an investment, at my suggestion, for yourself."

"Not a bit of it; I bought them to hold for you until you became able to buy them back. Since you were not able, I sold them at the best time, and now wish, as your agent, to turn over to you the profits. I know that you are trying to pay off that bank debt, and this will pay off all but ten thousand dollars—that is, if you will accept my commission toward the same worthy object."

For a few moments Raymond stood looking his friend in the face, neither saying a word; then Raymond said,

"Jerry, it is just like you, but I did not expect you would add this to all your kindness. You are the one who has made the people treat me well and show me such kindness. You have placed me back almost into my former position before society. I

owe everything to you. Yes, I will accept the money—even the commission—and pay off, with interest, every dollar I took from the bank. Then I shall feel easier, but shall not rest satisfied until I have paid off the notes, too, that those men gave me when cashier; then I will pay your commission."

"You can't do that," replied Jerry; "it is too late."

"It is never too late to make amends for misdeeds," said Raymond.

"Every rule has its exception, they say, and this has one. You can't pay the bank that money. It will not accept it, if I have anything to say about it."

"What have you to say?"

"Only this—that the notes were paid years ago."

"Who paid them?"

"I."

"How?"

"With money."

"Whose money?"

"The money of the men who gave and endorsed the notes."

"How did you get the money?"

"The men gave it."

"What? Hanks and Bundler?"

"Yes, and the others too."

"Jerry, what do you mean? Those men—Hanks and Bundler—were rascals."

"I know it."

"Then how did you get the money?"

"Lawyers do not always tell their secrets."

Jerry, after talking a while in this strain, told Raymond the whole story, and said that he had paid the bank the whole amount of the notes, after deducting what he had paid as purchase-money; so that the notes had been paid to the bank in full, with legal interest, and that the bank had not lost one cent by that transaction.

Of Raymond's surprise the reader need not be told, nor yet his delight when he paid back to the bank all the money he had taken, with legal interest, and felt himself a free man once more.

When the money was all paid over to the bank, the directors were amazed. They looked at one another in silent wonder when told of the unusual business transaction.

"What does this mean?" at length asked one.

"It means simply this," answered one of Raymond's friends—"that Mr. Leigh is living from Christian principle. He was under no obligation whatever to repay that money, but did it because he is a Christian and a man who will honor in the future any institution with which he is connected."

"Well, I never saw much of the kind of Christianity that our former cashier has shown of late; I believe in honoring it. When Mr. Harcourt resigns—and that will be soon, we may be sure, from what he told us before he went away—I propose that our former cashier be elected to take his place."

"Yet you thought that he should have been sentenced for life to State's prison!"

"Well, no matter what I thought then. I am ready to forgive and help back to his position any man who proves that he means to do right. Mr. Leigh has proved himself a man whom we can trust. He is making money very fast, they say; he must have made all this, though I think most of it came from Mr. Harcourt. No matter; the money is all paid."

"Now that I have paid all my debts, I want to use for doing good what I make above my living expenses and a reasonable amount invested for old age," said Raymond to his two friends on the evening after the debt to the bank had been paid. "I wish it were possible to use part of it for teaching boys and young men to shun the danger and evil into which I fell. What course can I take, pastor?"

"Teach them to take the Bible as their guide," answered the minister. "Only those who in early life become out-and-out Christians are safe as they grow older; even then they must remain faithful to their principles."

"Yes, and not carry along with them into manhood an evil habit, as I did. It may ruin them, as it came near ruining me. It would have done it had it not been for the grace of God."

THE END.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00014716026